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TELL THE TRUTH

THE EDITORS

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PART TWO:

THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENT IN GUATEMALA

ADOLFO GILLY

The Quality of China's Socialism CHARLES BETTELHEIM

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

"The biggest scoop of the year," a reviewer said about the book, *The Timely Rain,* when it was published in England several months ago. In 1962, with the first Tibetan passport issued by Peking, newspaperman Stuart Gelder, accompanied by Roma, his wife and co-author, made one of the most hazardous flights in the world over the vast ice-bound mountain barrier enclosing the most mysterious country on earth. With camera and tape-recorder they recorded what they saw and heard in Tibet and, two years later, published their unique book, illustrated with 28 superb color photographs and 40 black and white pictures. Edgar Snow has supplied an enthusiastic foreword.

The book was published in England by Hutchinson and it will be brought out in this country by MR Press. We expect shipment in two months and have scheduled September 10 as date of publication. With summer not yet here, it seems odd to be thinking of Christmas, but *The Timely Rain* is such a beautiful as well as informative book that we recommend it to you as an ideal Christmas gift book. The list price will be $8.95; until September 10 you can get it at a considerable saving—prepublication price is $6.

Another book from abroad which we think will be of special interest to MR readers is *Terres Vivantes* by Professor René Dumont of the Sorbonne. Underdeveloped countries the world over have invited this famous agronomist to advise them on their agricultural problems and in this book Professor Dumont reports on his findings in more than a dozen countries in Latin America, Africa, India, and Eastern Europe. Regrettably, the English publisher has translated the title into *Lands Alive*; we apologize for the title but we are proud of the book. List price on publication date, October 15, will be $6.75; prepublication price $4.50.

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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TELL THE TRUTH

This month we complete the publication of Adolfo Gilly's reports on the Guatemalan guerrilla movement. For reasons set forth in considerable detail in the last issue, we believe that what is taking place in Guatemala constitutes an historic breakthrough. The Guatemalans have learned through their own experience that to strive for a revolution on a program acceptable to the so-called national bourgeoisie is to court certain defeat. They have therefore abandoned this whole strategy and have openly proclaimed socialism as their goal and a workers' and peasants' state as the means to its attainment. Contrary to the predictions of traditional left-wing leaders and theorists, this new strategy has met with the enthusiastic acceptance of the Guatemalan masses. As a consequence, the whole conception of guerrilla war in Latin America is undergoing a fundamental transformation: the Guatemalans are rediscovering and applying in a Latin American context the ideas and methods developed in the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. New and exciting perspectives are opening up to the Latin American and world revolutions.

But has all this any relevance for the Left of the advanced capitalist countries, and especially of the United States? Certainly no one would contend that the workers of the United States are ready to respond to a revolutionary socialist message. (There are so few farmers remaining in this country that they can hardly be considered a major political force any longer.) Must we conclude from this that the United States Left has nothing to learn from the revolutionary surge forward in the underdeveloped world? Should we rather agree with those leftists and progressives who argue that since the workers lack a socialist

This *Review of the Month* was written before the United States' intervention in the Dominican Republic.

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consciousness it is necessary to concentrate efforts on promoting measures of reform which they are ready, or nearly ready, to support?

Answers to these questions will of course depend largely on one's understanding of the situation both in the United States and internationally. If one believes that capitalism in the United States has brought real benefits to the workers in the postwar period and that further progress along the same lines is possible, *and* if one believes that the system and its beneficiaries are capable of accepting peaceful coexistence with other social systems as a permanent way of life, then indeed one could make out a strong case for adopting a program with the twin objectives of winning further reforms and strengthening the peaceful wing of the ruling class.

A few months ago, when Candidate Johnson was promising the "Great Society" and cooing like a dove, there was perhaps some excuse for entertaining such beliefs. But how can they survive the reality of President Johnson's war policies in Asia? Can radicals worthy of the name *still* fail to recognize the central fact of our epoch—the permanent and ever spreading war of the dominant capitalist power against the world revolution? And if they do recognize this fact, how can they fail to understand that whatever reforms the United States ruling class is willing to concede have one purpose and one purpose only, to lure the American people into supporting a vicious war against the poor and underprivileged of the earth?

It might appear that socialists in the United States are in a hopeless dilemma. The workers are not ready to listen to propaganda for a socialist revolution, however much it may be in their interest. And to support the kind of reform program which has any chance of adoption is to join in an alliance with the ruling class against those who are fighting for the socialist revolution in the rest of the world. Is there any way out?

We suggest that, despite all the differences between their situation and ours, the Guatemalan guerrillas have pointed the way to us. They have taken a decisive step toward the *internationalization* of their struggle. Their appeal is not to Guatemalans as such but to peasants and workers, and they know that the enemy they are fighting against is not just a local oligarchy

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but imperialism with its headquarters in Washington and its lieutenants and allies all over the world—in a word, *international imperialism*. And as Yon Sosa, one of the top guerrilla leaders, makes clear in the interview reported by Gilly in this issue, they have accepted the full implications of these facts. They are under no illusions that they can win alone. They want all the help they can get in any and every form, but above all in the form of the speediest possible spread of the revolution to other countries and continents. International imperialism can be defeated only by international revolution. The Guatemalan guerrillas have to fight on their home front because that's where they are. But they are doing far more than trying to solve the problems of the Guatemalan people: they are doing their share to win a global victory over a global enemy. Only in the context of such a victory is there any realistic hope of solving the problems of the Guatemalan people.

We believe that this is the only appropriate position for socialists in the world of today, not only in Guatemala but in all other countries as well. But we do not for a moment underestimate the fundamental nature of the change in intellectual and emotional attitudes which adopting it will involve for many of them, especially those in the countries of advanced capitalism.

Socialists in the United States, for example, have got to stop thinking of themselves as a tiny minority with the task—which many of them have already concluded is hopeless—of making a specifically American revolution. Instead, they must think of themselves as members of an immense international movement, capable of embracing the overwhelming majority of mankind, which has the revolutionary task of defeating and overthrowing international imperialism. Psychologically speaking, this involves going over from the minority to the majority and from the losing side to the winning side; it means escaping from the inevitable parochialism, isolationism, and sectarianism of an internally oriented Left; it means acquiring new perspectives and a new conception of strategy and tactics.

What can American socialists contribute to the struggle against international imperialism?

Some may answer, very little. We say that we can and should contribute a lot. There are not very many of us, to be

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sure. But we have the advantage over all other socialists of being situated right in the lair of the monster. In certain important respects we know more than others—or at least should know more—about its habits, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Surely it is not only an honorable but also an important function to make use of our unique opportunities to help the world socialist movement to acquire a deeper understanding of the enemy.

But that is not all, far from it. It would be stupidity or blindness to maintain that because the workers in the United States lack a socialist consciousness, there are no important political tasks for socialists within the country. The situation has never, not even in the Great Depression of the 1930's, been so favorable for the *creation* of a socialist consciousness. The Negro liberation movement is a mass movement which is steadily growing in size and militancy. And under the terrific impact of the Vietnam crisis, the peace movement has suddenly shown that it has the potential to become a mass movement. Moreover, and this is a fact of enormous importance, the two movements are coming closer together and even giving indications of coalescing. No one who participated in the magnificent demonstration against the war in Vietnam in Washington on April 17th can doubt this. But these are not socialist movements, and they will not spontaneously develop into socialist movements. In fact, at this stage they are not movements which have any clearly defined positive goals. They are still essentially protest movements against overwhelming evils. If they remain mere protest movements, they will certainly fail as so many protest movements throughout American history have failed. To grow and develop and eventually succeed, they must learn to understand the evils they are protesting against, to see that these evils are *inevitable* manifestations of monopoly capitalism, and to set themselves the goal of overthrowing the evil-breeding system and replacing it by a socialist society of collective ownership and production for use. Who if not socialists are to take on the job of teaching these truths? And can any socialist anywhere have any doubt about the enormous importance of doing the job and doing it well?

We can anticipate two types of objections. Some will say that teaching is not enough; one must act. They misunderstand the teaching function. While there must of course be some divi-

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sion of labor, in general teaching and acting are complementary, not contradictory. The best teacher is one who participates in collective action, for which there are now infinite opportunities, and draws for himself and others the full implications of successes and failures.

Others will object that the masses are not yet ready to learn. Maybe, and maybe they are much more ready than the doubters imagine. But that is beside the point. What is crucially important is not to grasp for, still less to rest all one's hopes on, immediate successes but to see the historic process clearly and to act in conformity with visible trends and foreseeable realities. A society based on exploitation and privilege is not going to do justice to its most exploited and underprivileged group: the revolutionary potential of the Negro masses will not easily be drained away by any concessions United States monopoly capitalism is capable of making. And as the tide of world revolution rises, American blacks will increasingly identify with their brothers abroad rather than with their exploiters at home.

But Negroes are only a minority, we are told. The real revolutionary power in this country, if there is ever to be one, must lie in the working class which is predominantly white. In this connection, one must never forget that the overwhelming majority of the members of the United States capitalist society are workers, employed or unemployed, even if a diminishing proportion of them conform to the traditional blue-collar stereotype. The implication is clear: most of the American people will have to become revolutionary, or at least willing to accept revolution, before United States monopoly capitalism can be overthrown.

Is that such a fantastic prospect? We do not think so. The United States as the leading imperialist power is bound to get deeper and deeper into the morass of global counter-revolutionary war. And as Vietnam is already proving, this war cannot be confined to aerial bombing and strafing. To an ever increasing extent American armies are going to be conscripted and sent into the jungles and deserts and mountains of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. American casualties will mount from the hundreds to the thousands; from the thousands to the tens and hundreds of thousands; and, yes, to the millions. But there will be no victories and never an end in sight. The Vietnamese peasants have been

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fighting imperialist invaders for more than 20 years now and give every sign of determination to fight another 20 if necessary. And they are basically no different from the rest of those whom Frantz Fanon called the "damned of the earth." A man can only die once, and it is better to die for a cause than from starvation and disease.

Is it not clear that the American people, so tame and docile now, must sooner or later be revolted by this senseless carnage? And when they are and begin to grope for a way out of the morass, to whom will they listen? To those who have so grievously misled them? To those who have assured them that everything is really all right except for a few missing reforms? Or to those who have consistently told them that the whole system of capitalism and imperialism is rotten and anti-human and was bound to lead to endless bloodshed and suffering? We may not be able to overthrow this system for some time to come, but right now we can tell the truth about it. And in the long run the truth is a more powerful weapon than men of no imagination and little faith can ever comprehend.

Tell the truth—that capitalism and imperialism are doomed, that the socialist revolution is the only road to salvation. This must be the basis of sound socialist strategy in the United States as well as in Guatemala and all the other countries of the capitalist world. It does not constitute a whole program, to be sure; but without it no genuine socialist program is possible. The alternative is a shallow kind of reformism that can only strengthen the system of exploitation and injustice which produces and reproduces so much unnecessary misery and suffering in the world today.

(April 24, 1965)

Any action that unites a segment of the American population, no matter how small it may seem, with the global revolution, represents and introduces in the United States an immense strength, in the same way that the Algerian combatant did not represent only the fire power of his gun, but the constant and powerful action of an entire people.

—Adolfo Gilly in his introduction to *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* by Frantz Fanon (to be published by MR Press in Sept., 1965).

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Part Two

THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENT IN GUATEMALA

BY ADOLFO GILLY

VII. The Struggle for the Land

Ever since Cuba and Guatemala were colonized, their land has been measured in *caballerías*, one *cabellería* being the minimum land grant made to a Spanish gentleman. Perhaps the "gentlemen" were greedier in Guatemala or the land less productive; at any rate, the Cuban *caballería* measures slightly over 13 hectares [about 32 acres], whereas in Guatemala it is the rough equivalent of 54 hectares [130 acres]. The United Fruit Company (together with its subsidiary, the Compañiia Agrícola de Guatemala) is the largest *latifundista* in Guatemala, possessing many more *caballerías* than any colonial gentleman could have dreamed of owning: over 5,000 (roughly 650,000 acres). Less than 8 percent of the total is cultivated.

At the other extreme, 57 percent of the peasants own no land whatsoever, although 70 percent of the economically active population is connected with agriculture.

In his *Guatemala, monografía sociológica,* Mario Monteforte Toledo (basing himself on the 1960 census) presents the following picture of land ownership:

(1) More than 308,000 *fincas* [farms], or 88.4 percent of the total number, measure less than 7 hectares each [about 17 acres] —a manifestly insufficient amount of land on which to support a family, especially when the poor quality of the land is taken into account.

(2) Eighty percent of the *fincas* occupy only 10 percent of the total area, whereas 20 percent of the *fincas* occupy the remaining 90 percent of the area.

(3) Whereas 22 of the largest *fincas,* occupying over 8,960 hectares each, account for 13.4 percent of the total area, 165,850

The translation is by Bobbye Ortiz.

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small *fincas* cover less than 1.4 hectares each and account for only 3.2 percent of the total area.

(4) Only 39.6 percent of the total area of the *fincas* is under cultivation. Whereas the *minifundios* [small landholdings] cultivate virtually their entire acreage, the medium-sized properties are less than 25 percent cultivated, and the large properties only 5.7 percent. These figures reveal not only the large amount of top-quality land that is left uncultivated but also the neglect of its owners to work it and make it fulfill its social function.

But this is not the complete story of concentrated agrarian property ownership: 104 *fincas*, measuring from 2,240 to 4,480 hectares each, are the property of 23 individuals; 32 *fincas*, measuring from 4,480 to 8,960 hectares each, belong to 5 individuals; and the 22 *fincas* that cover more than 8,960 hectares each—constituting 13.4 percent of the total area—belong to three owners!

The semi-mountainous province of Izabal—headquarters of United Fruit and also a guerrilla stronghold—has, along with Alta Verapaz (another center of guerrilla strength), the highest proportion of *latifundios* of any Guatemalan province.

It is not necessary to amass statistics on backwardness of agricultural methods; it suffices to mention that the annual yield of corn—the basis of the Guatemalan diet—is only 918 kilos per hectare, as against 2,797 in Canada and 2,482 in the United States.

It was in the light of such statistics that Arbenz, between 1952 and 1954, attempted to institute certain agrarian reforms. His "Decree 900," which embodied these reforms, had nothing to do with socialism. Its preamble stated:

> The agrarian reform of the Revolution aims to liquidate feudal rural property and the relations of production arising from it, in order to develop capitalist methods and forms of production in agriculture and to prepare the way for the industrialization of Guatemala.

During two years of reform, 584,000 hectares (or 15 percent) of all farm lands were expropriated, with indemnification; parcels of land were allotted to some 54,000 families (approximately 270,000 persons). After the "liberation" these reforms

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were revoked. According to Monteforte Toledo, by 1958 the agrarian reform had been revoked to the extent of some 90 percent in respect to the return of the *fincas* to their former owners and by 60 percent in respect to dispossession of new owners.

But agrarian reform meant not only land distribution but also the abolition of feudal and semi-feudal servitude and the obligations of peasants to provide unpaid labor in exchange for rent. It signified, above all, the beginning of social participation by the masses, who were beginning to mobilize on their own initiative, independently of the paternalist and capitalist ideology from which the agrarian reform had sprung. The "liberationist" counter-revolution, capitalizing on the weakness of the government and its agrarian reform, launched an attack—not primarily to undo what had been done but to forestall what was in the offing.

The conclusion to be drawn from Guatemala's experience is further confirmed by the experiences of other Latin American countries: only Mexico, Bolivia, and Cuba—through armed revolution and defeat of the army—have been able to institute thorough-going agrarian reform. Once the Mexican peasants were disarmed, agrarian reform suffered a setback and the *latifundios* were, to a large extent, reconstituted. In Bolivia, where the peasants were armed but unable to win state power, agrarian reform has bogged down. Only in Cuba, with arms and revolutionary state power to back it, has agrarian reform held its own and gained ground.

In Guatemala agrarian reform was not only limited, paternalistic, and timid, but, by ruling out a mobilization of armed, organized peasants to implement distribution of land, its failure was assured. The counter-revolution totally wiped it out.

A peasant in the Sierra de las Minas explained another aspect of Arbenz's agrarian reform to me:

> The reform was drawn up in the capital; decisions on parcelling were made there, and then the technicians were sent to carry out the decisions. Sometimes a peasant who had cleared and worked four strips of land would, according to the new allocations, be deprived of two of them, in exchange for two uncultivated strips. This not only meant extra work but also led to conflicts among the

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peasants, and we didn't have an organization that could mediate. It's true we had the Peasant Center; we were members and we had leaders, but in actual fact the organization never held meetings and it didn't really help us resolve our problems. The leadership was appointed from above and they had very little contact with us. When the "liberation" came, the leadership did nothing, even though we were waiting to be given arms to defend the government.

The *latifundistas* were not satisfied even with the Castillo Armas counter-revolution and the subsequent dictatorships, including that of Peralta Azurdia. In fact, they have continued their "private war" and have seized additional properties, some of which had been registered as their nominal property, though cultivated for generations by peasants of the area, inasmuch as absentee landlords had shown no interest in them. State properties, cultivated by peasants living on them without title, have also been seized. The *latifundistas* are beginning to show interest in both types of property and are attempting to devise ways to appropriate and incorporate them into their own domains. Thus does capitalism—backward Guatemalan capitalism—attempt to take over the countryside, not by agrarian reform but by brutal depredations.

The *latifundistas* of the northeast zone have for some time been carrying out an offensive against the small peasants. Their plan is to appropriate vast areas of land for large-scale cattle raising. They dispossess the peasants from their cornfields and their vegetable gardens and bring in their own cattle to graze there. Protests are met with bloody suppression.

As the guerrilla force grows stronger, many taxes and other forms of tribute are rejected, by decision of the guerrilla force, or by a peasant assembly whose decisions are subsequently enforced by the *guerrilleros*. They say to the *latifundista*: "Henceforth, you may not collect a toll from the peasants crossing the river." The *latifundista* loves his money, but he loves his life even more, so the guerrilla pronouncement is heeded. Were the peasants alone to protest the toll, the army could subjugate them rapidly, but the *guerrilleros* are also armed and it has been demonstrated frequently that the army cannot be relied on to challenge their decisions.

In other cases the guerrillas have stopped the dispossessions

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by warning those responsible for them that they must cease; if the warnings are not heeded, the offenders are put on trial by the peasants. Thus, certain hatchetmen of the *latifundistas*, who had burned huts and crops and denounced militant peasants to the army, were tried. The sentence—the death sentence—was carried out by the guerrilla force.

On several occasions, *latifundio* administrators who had dispossessed peasants were first warned; if they persisted in their anti-peasant campaigns, they were executed by the guerrillas or the peasant militia. Very often, after an administrator was executed, a new administrator would not be appointed in his place, and the peasants were thus left free to plant their crops unmolested on rent-free land.

These are some of the battles in this small war for the land. This struggle, however, is not the final struggle. At this stage the peasants are acquiring confidence in the guerrilla movement, defending themselves against the aggressions of the *latifundistas*, and resisting harassment by the army. They have, in a manner of speaking, their own little guerrilla army which defends them against the regular army and the *latifundistas*. But, above all, they are building confidence in their own ability to take their stand; they are fortifying their conviction that it is necessary to resist and that the army and the *latifundistas* are not omnipotent. They are strengthening their belief in themselves. And the guerrilla force stresses this fact constantly: without you, the peasants, we cannot defy the army. When the guerrilla movement has acquired authority and when the peasantry has acquired confidence in its own strength, then the conditions will be ripe for the next great step: the organization of the peasantry.

Peasant organization, supported and sustained by guerrilla arms, is the precondition and the instrument necessary for the struggle to win the land. Not the defensive struggle, but the offensive struggle. Not agrarian reform from above, but the distribution of land with arms in hand—peasant warfare, the agrarian revolution. The Guatemalan guerrilla force is today preparing for that hour.

VIII. Peasant Organization

Not until the guerrilla patrol had become widely acquainted

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with the villagers of Caldo de Pava—discussing with them local problems, the need for organization, and the form such organization should take—did it organize a peasant committee in the village. The peasants chose their candidates for leadership, and the guerrilla unit advised them on the setting up of such an underground committee. One of the *guerrilleros* told me:

My experience with several village organizations has led me to realize how well the peasants know their own people, with what unerring judgment they appraise each other. Whenever we prepare for a meeting, for the formation of a peasant committee, or some other activity, the moment comes in which the question must be asked: who, among the villagers, is or might become a *chillón* [squealer]? We always ask this question of each peasant in private, to encourage a frank answer. It was amazing for us to see how 50 inhabitants of a certain village (with one or two exceptions) coincided in pointing to the same individuals as *chillones,* actual or potential! Generally, experience confirmed the opinions of the villagers, although we had been somewhat skeptical at the beginning, fearing that their judgments would be distorted by personal grudges or prejudices. But we soon realized that when it was a question of the organization, the peasants were scrupulously objective.

Another *guerrillero* told me:

A peasant is usually very cautious in offering his evaluation of a fellow peasant. He avoids direct accusation. It often happens that we enter a village and in the course of talking with the local people, one of them will warn us: "*Compañero,* be careful with so-and-so, he's a little confused. Perhaps you can explain things to him, help him to understand why he oughtn't to make trouble for us." In such comments the tone of voice conveys more than the words themselves. With a little experience you soon learn how to interpret these simple statements, and more elaborate explanations are unnecessary.

In Caldo de Pava the peasant committee was organized at an all-village assembly. It was a holiday and everyone was there—men and women, the old and the young. Although the *guerrilleros* had said nothing on the subject, all the men came with some sort of firearm, some with old hunting rifles, others with 22-calibre rifles, and a few with pistols; or, lacking these,

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with the ubiquitous *machete*. The *guerrilleros* hadn't even known about the smallarms—scarce and obsolete though they were. It was explained that the guns had been carefully concealed from the eyes of army snoopers. To bring them to the assembly was the most eloquent demonstration the villagers could offer of their willingness to participate in the struggle.

The assembled peasants chose a committee of three: a military representative, a civilian representative, and a liaison with committees in other villages. The assembled peasants discussed with the *guerrilleros* the village's problems and the struggle for the land. The committee was to lead them in this struggle.

Similar committees were set up by other villages. Details and personalities varied but in essence the assemblies were the same, just as problems were also similar throughout the region. To begin with, the committee is the village's point of contact with the guerrilla unit functioning in the area, organizing collaboration with it, supplying it with information and, when necessary, with supplies. (The guerrilla unit also has its own information and supply network, so that it is not totally dependent on newly formed committees.)

Furthermore, the peasant committee is the center of organization for the peasant militia. The *milicianos* are peasants who have joined the armed struggle, without giving up their farming activities. When the guerrilla force needs them, they participate in an action or a mission and then return to their normal life as tillers of the soil. At times the *milicianos* are converted into *guerrilleros,* for brief periods, incorporating themselves totally into guerrilla life. But, in the majority of cases they function as *milicianos*; the guerrilla force, out of considerations of mobility and effectiveness, requires a smaller number of men for armed struggle than does the militia.

The militia is becoming the instrument for mass peasant participation in the armed struggle. Guatemalans have, within the context of their country's conditions, adopted the worldwide principles and organizational forms of agrarian revolution. The Chinese revolution organized a vast peasant militia, side by side with its Red Army, as a basis of support and recruitment for Mao's troops.

In Latin America the broadest and best organized militia

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movement grew up around the Bolivian revolution. But the Bolivian militia is based not on guerrilla arms but on occupation of the land, which was carried out by the peasants after the April 1952 revolution, and by peasant unions set up to defend the land and the revolution. They are, properly speaking, peasant union militias, although the Bolivian peasant union is not typical: its members are not landless agricultural workers organizing against a landowner, but peasants who own their own land and have set up the union as a form of collective organization.

The peasant militia organized by the Guatemalan guerrilla force has drawn on both Chinese and Bolivian experience. It is a militia linked to the guerrilla force, collaborating militarily with it. But at the same time, the militia constitutes the armed expression of the peasant organization, of the peasant committee. At least it moves in that direction.

The peasants of Caldo de Pava who—although no one asked them to do so—went to their assembly with arms in hand indicated thus their understanding of the nature of a peasant committee. A committee that is not backed by arms is not viable. The strongest armed support is, of course, provided by the guerrilla force; but what happens when a guerrilla unit is not in the vicinity? The peasant militia alone is generally not yet able to pit itself against army detachments (although it has occasionally done so—and successfully—through harassing actions and ambushes). But the existence of the militia gives security not only to its own members but also to the peasantry at large, by warning or otherwise dissuading anyone who might be tempted to collaborate with the enemy, and by maintaining continuity of the armed struggle in the interval between one guerrilla action and the next.

Wherever there is a basis for a militia group, a small guerrilla unit can rely on material aid in its plans for action or in any task whose scope is too broad to be carried out without help. In such a case the militia group is temporarily incorporated into the patrol. In these missions the *miliciano* acquires military experience, builds confidence in his own strength, and prepares for bigger actions.

By the support it gives to the guerrillas, the peasantry is in fact participating in the armed struggle. The militia is the most

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direct form of collective participation, the link between the peasant mass from which it is drawn and the guerrilla force that fights, arms in hand. And it is a preparation for the future participation of broad sectors in the armed struggle, once the guerrilla force's field of action expands.

Not all peasants are *milicianos* of course, only those who volunteer and are accepted by the militia group or the peasant committee. However, all the peasants in a village generally participate in the election of the peasant committee and its operation. An individual is rarely excluded, since such an action constitutes virtual ostracism from the village's collective life.

The problems of a given village or zone are the problems the committee grapples with and attempts to solve. For example, it might lead a struggle against a *latifundista* who is attempting to dispossess a poor peasant, or against his overseer who has sent cattle to graze in the peasants' cornfields. The committee discusses what measures to take and how to take them, rather than leaving the matter to the individual reaction of each peasant who sees his crops destroyed by cattle. The peasants quickly grasp the advantages of this method. Singly, each one who challenges the *latifundista* or his representative and, in extreme cases, resorts to violence, is likely to be persecuted and brutally subdued by the army or the *latifundista's* henchmen. United, they are held in respect and can put the militia into action against anyone who is maltreating a peasant, without implicating the peasant in question.

For example, the committee may implement an agreement entered into by the peasants not to pay an arbitrary tax levied on them by the local *latifundista*; or they may act on abuses committed by an overseer; they may prepare for the seizure of certain lands by the peasants; they may discuss how best to protect a peasant's land threatened with seizure; they may organize a discussion with peasants of a neighboring village concerning common problems. The possibilities of action by the committees are as numerous as the problems of the peasants.

As the committee becomes better established, it gains authority and is able to resolve questions peripheral to the struggle against the peasants' enemies, such as conflicts among the peasants themselves over land or crops or cattle. The peasants are

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beginning to realize that referring to the committee produces more equitable and effective results than can be obtained through putting problems in the hands of a state agency or through individual action. A *guerrillero* told me:

> We knew that a certain peasant who had had a dispute with his neighbor had taken the matter to court. We advised them to discuss the matter with the committee, but both of them were so furious that they insisted on going to court, ignoring our advice and that of the committee. This resulted in a loss of their time and money, they were both taken advantage of by the court, and their dispute was not settled. They then came to a village assembly and discussed their conflict, and their differences were easily resolved. At the beginning they had not been willing to accept the assembly's authority; but ultimately they were convinced that the committee was more effective than the court. This gave the committee's prestige a strong boost throughout the community.

The peasant committee sometimes intervenes in domestic quarrels between husband and wife, two neighbors, or the wives of two peasants. Such quarrels are not always brought to the committee, which never intervenes unless requested to do so. But when its authority is recognized in a village where a problem arises, someone will usually say: "You ought to take it to the committee"; or someone will call in a member of the committee—or a *guerrillero* if the patrol is in the area—and urge his participation in a discussion which generally leads to a solution reached collectively.

Thus, arising out of the guerrilla struggle, a peasant organization grows and acquires power and the authority that can challenge the authority of the capitalist state. It is not only a matter of guerrillas pitted against the army, but of the peasant committees in confrontation with the capitalist state. In both cases a comparison of material forces would show tremendous imbalance; but the authority of the guerrilla force and the committees is not material but social: it is an authority conferred on them by support, acceptance, and participation on the part of the peasant population.

The guerrilla force, in meetings and discussions, points out to the peasants that they are already governing themselves in part, and that this is preparation for governing the entire country

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in the near future. They are told, in essence:

> This is how a government of workers and peasants is created. *We* are not going to create it in the capital; *you* are creating it here and now. When victory is ours, it will be the committees that govern throughout the country; in other words, you—together with workers' committees in the towns—will be the government.

Each peasant understands this perfectly, because he sees it happening around him.

The Guatemalan guerrilla force has reached the conclusion that it is impossible to create real peasant committees without this perspective—without, in other words, a program of socialist revolution. In every place where workers and peasants have created committees of this type—in the 1936 Spanish revolution, in the Russian revolution, in the guerrilla warfare of the Italian and Yugoslav partisans, in the Chinese revolution—they have created them with the intention and the goal of ultimately taking power. The program of the "democratic revolution," on the other hand, rejects the committees, since these substitute for the state, which the national democratic revolution is attempting to *transform*, not *destroy*. In other words, the polemic between these two tendencies is not a remote theoretical question; the answer given has immediate practical repercussions for the guerrilla force's primary activities. And it is clear to the Guatemalan *guerrilleros* that no peasant will agree to form a committee and run all the contingent risks of the struggle if he is told that after victory he must leave government to the "progressive bourgeoisie" which will set about developing "capitalist relations of production."

Not that the committees always function smoothly. The guerrilla force has had to learn through experience, and every day it continues to learn. Sometimes a committee simply does not function; sometimes a committee is persecuted by the army and it dissolves; sometimes other problems arise that lead to temporary inactivity. These are the contingencies faced by any organization, especially by a new one, which is creating itself out of daily experience, and which has no precedent in Guatemala. The guerrilla force is not discouraged by these vicissitudes, because it has also had a good share of positive experiences;

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wherever a committee has functioned well, the peasants begin to reorganize it at the first opportunity though faced with the menace of repressions, moving ahead on their original path. Furthermore, they are constantly perfecting their organization and extending its scope. For example, one of the committees acting on a suggestion of the guerrilla patrol, decided that the villagers should collectively work the land of fellow peasants who had been jailed, thus producing enough food to maintain the prisoners' families.

The guerrilla force, even when it is physically absent, becomes part of the peasant community's daily life. Everyone knows that even though it is constantly on the move, it always returns, and meantime continuity is maintained by the peasant committee and the militia. The guerrilla force, no matter where it appears, constitutes an affirmation of the support given it by the committees, the militia units, and all the unorganized villages where it is awaited, welcomed, aided, and protected by the peasants.

By now it would be impossible to destroy or uproot the guerrilla force. It may suffer attacks and losses but it is here to stay, because it is an inextricable part of peasant existence. Even though it has not yet, properly speaking, liberated a territory—that is, an area in which the army can no longer operate—it has in fact a substantial area under its control, in which it can function with relative mobility, security, and freedom.

The Guatemalan guerrillas have ambushed army units in the mountains and on the roads; they have executed the sentences imposed by peasants against exploiters and criminals; they have occupied villages and military posts, ousting and destroying army detachments in the process, as happened in Panzós, Río Hondo, El Refugio, and other villages.

The local population, on all such occasions, has made its support felt, both before and after a guerrilla-military encounter. For example, after Panzós was occupied by the guerrilla squad of Commander Turcios, a public meeting was held in the square, at which the entire village was present. The guerrilla squad had confiscated all arms and supplies belonging to the military post; it had bought provisions in local shops, paying prevailing prices. It had then drawn up an agreement which the mayor was

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obliged to sign, in the presence of the villagers. The occupation of Panzós—which took place on October 17, 1964, in commemoration of the anniversary of the revolution of October 20, 1944—was carried out with no losses by the guerrilla force; there were three wounded and two dead among army personnel.

Before occupying the village of Río Hondo, the guerrilla patrol assaulted and occupied a hydroelectric station, taking prisoner the five soldiers who were guarding it. It then appropriated a pick-up truck that belonged to the management and moved on toward Río Hondo which it occupied, after quashing resistance put up by the local military outpost. Casualties: one *guerrillero* wounded, two soldiers dead.

Río Hondo and Panzós are located in the province of Zacapa. Caldo de Pava, on the other hand, cannot be found on a map. It is one of the pseudonyms used by the guerrilla force for villages whose real names it prefers not to reveal. In the revolutionary struggle sometimes even the villages must use pseudonyms.

IX. Daily Life in a Guerrilla Camp

Equality is the keystone of guerrilla life. Duties such as carrying equipment and preparing food are equitably shared. Anything that threatens equality, anything that might imply privilege for one group or another, immediately weakens the spirit and inner unity of the guerrilla force. Equality becomes the *guerrillero's* second nature. One night, one of the commanders distributed, among the twelve of us present, the last bit of bean cake, of which there was scarcely enough for one. To divide it equally demanded the precision of a surgeon's scalpel. The slices were minute; chewing and swallowing them scarcely gave even the illusion of eating. But at least they were equal.

Equality and discussion of all problems—from the most fundamental political issues to the slightest friction among the *guerrilleros* themselves—unite the guerrilla force; and so does collective facing of danger. Thus it can resist, develop greater strength, and wrest victories from the very hardships and perils of the struggle; and it can unite with the peasant masses in whose midst it exists and struggles.

The guerrilla force carries on continuous political discussions.

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Its principal medium is the newspaper *Revolución Socialista.* Each issue that reaches a guerrilla camp is read and discussed by the entire group. The paper aids the *guerrilleros* in their organizational work among the peasants by providing them with explanations of political issues; furthermore, it gives cohesion to the inner life of the guerrilla unit itself, without which it would be impossible to undertake organization of outside groups.

Revolución Socialista is not only written for the peasants and workers who are sympathetic to the guerrilla movement and for the population at large; a perusal of the paper reveals clearly that it is largely addressed to the movement itself and to its closest collaborators. In this regard it follows Lenin in his conception of the newspaper as a collective political instrument of organization. The validity of this conception is proved by the ways in which the guerrilla force utilizes it; articles are discussed at marching halts, and on subsequent occasions its central ideas reappear in conversations with peasants; when time and circumstances permit, it is read aloud to them and analyzed. Indian members of a guerrilla unit, when they have a free moment, gather together to read *Revolución Socialista, Pekín Informa* (*Peking Review*), and other documents and discuss them in their own language.

The international situation occupies an important place in the political discussions of the *guerrilleros*: Latin America, the Congo, Vietnam. They virtually live the news from Vietnam as if it were a neighboring village. One night, two *guerrilleros* and I listened to a United States broadcast on South Vietnam; it described, in dramatic language, the vicissitudes of the war against the Vietnamese guerrillas—the ambushes and surprise attacks of the guerrillas and their allies among the population carried out against the United States and the South Vietnamese government forces. We talked spiritedly and long that night. One of the men, who had been sleeping in his hammock, woke up and joined the discussion.

The Guatemalan guerrilla force sees its own socialist objective with great clarity and feels, therefore, all the more strongly linked to the fate of the socialist countries—Cuba, China, the Soviet Union. It observes the revolutionary advances in Vietnam and the Congo, the socialist and revolutionary struggles in

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Europe, Asia, and the entire world—and feels them to be part of its own strength, sees their participants as its allies. Every *guerrillero* understands that such struggles contribute to the weakening of the Guatemalan dictatorship and its backers in Washington and the Pentagon; it feels that the Vietnamese *guerrilleros* are, in their fashion, striking at Peralta Azurdia, dictator of Guatemala.

The global concept of the relationship of forces between revolution and counter-revolution throughout the world is an intrinsic component of the socialist program of the Guatemalan *guerrilleros*. The advance from a nationalist to a socialist program has magnified the guerrilla movement's own inner strength and, consequently, its capacity for struggle, as well as its initiative and boldness of plan. Its conscious and deliberate audacity is a source of strength as potent as the latest-model weapons.

Daily life has undergone changes in the guerrilla camps, becoming more fraternal and unified. This is due not merely to the passage of time but also to an increase in understanding of its tasks, of the peasantry, of the program of socialist revolution. The unflagging support offered by the peasantry has increased self-assurance. "Many of us acquire a real sense of confidence in our program when we see how well it is received by the peasants, how fervently they respond to the idea of a workers' and peasants' government, how it fills them with enthusiasm and mobilizes them for action," one of the *guerrilleros* said.

The village meetings, the peasant committees, the military combats, all these varied undertakings have, with the passage of time, unified the *guerrilleros* and have led to a kind of weeding-out process in their ranks, to which the very ruggedness of the struggle and of life in the mountains has contributed.

Some of the *guerrilleros* are unmarried. Others have wives and families whom they have left behind in villages and towns; they speak infrequently of their families, but when they do mention them, one realizes that their silence does not signify indifference but the contrary. War is war and has its own laws. As the words of a song of the International Brigades in Spain had it: "We have come from all corners of the earth./ We are

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here and ready for the struggle./If we have left our homes to do battle it is because the International is our home."

The Guatemalan *guerrilleros* also sing, needless to say. New words have been put to the tune of "El Grito," a popular Guatemalan song: "If you're a good Guatemalan and a real man, pick up your rifle and go to the mountains, where dignity awaits you." But when singing begins, Mexican songs are most often heard, perhaps because of the gaiety of their melodies, and because their words—from which bullets are never absent—reflect the fighting guerrilla spirit.

"In the villages, after we've held a political discussion, we usually sing together with the peasants, especially in the Indian communities," I was told. "They sing their songs for us and we reciprocate. And do you know which one they always ask for? 'The Tomb of Pancho Villa'!" For the Guatemalan peasant the Mexican *guerrillero* Villa still lives, at least in song.

X. The City

MR-13 (Revolutionary Movement of November 13), the official organization of the guerrilla movement, has its underground urban units, especially in Guatemala City, which have been evolving their own patterns of existence, particularly during the past year. The newspaper *Revolución Socialista* has acted as a strong political link between the guerrilla force and the city population. In the towns, *Revolución Socialista* addresses itself primarily to workers and students. They are the basic supporters of the revolutionary process, considering themselves to be the allies of the *guerrilleros* and identifying with them. In fact, every armed guerrilla action finds its echo in the towns. The influence and prestige of the guerrilla movement in Guatemala are widespread, and any reference to it at a meeting or gathering of any kind arouses an immediate display of support. The newspaper undertakes to destroy the curtain of silence with which censorship has attempted to black out news of guerrilla activities. But it has another and more important function: to draw political conclusions from each action; to show workers and students what follow-up actions could be taken and how they should organize to voice their demands; what their program should be and what steps could be taken to bring victory nearer.

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In this respect the Guatemalan guerrilla movement differs from and is more advanced than other guerrilla movements. It does not reject terrorism as such: "We are not against terrorism, but we are against terrorism that has no concrete political purpose, that is not accompanied by mass actions such as strikes," Yon Sosa told journalists in September, in the Sierra de las Minas. "We know that terrorism is not the best way to further the revolution. Terrorism alone can change nothing. Only if it constitutes one element in a wider program of political action will it win the public's support rather than its repudiation." In one of its published documents MR-13 says:

> Terrorism has never destroyed a class nor overthrown a government. It should only be employed as a supplementary activity, in support of other actions. For example, at a given moment during a strike, in which the intention is to overturn the capitalist regime, the liquidation of three or four leaders of the enemy would have an enormous effect, because it would demoralize, disconcert, and create confusion in the enemy's ranks, thus allowing us to advance.

In reality MR-13 has merely adopted Marxist and Leninist ideas on individual terrorism, developed particularly in the polemics that took place during the early stages of the Bolshevik movement. The subordinate role that the Guatemalan guerrilla movement assigns to terrorism is completely in accord with its socialist program, which is based on the idea that fundamental forms of struggle in the towns are those that involve mass participation and mobilization: strikes, occupation of factories and universities, demonstrations, and ultimately, the armed general strike together with the widening of guerrilla territorial control and peasant warfare.

The socialist program denies a revolutionary role to the national bourgeoisie and exalts the role of the diametrically opposing class, the proletariat. Consequently it is free to utilize, jointly with peasant warfare, the most appropriate methods of struggle, even the most drastic and violent methods such as the general strike and the urban insurrection at the decisive moment. Thus the guerrilla force links the peasant war, the general strike, and the urban insurrection in a process of parallel and joint actions.

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According to the militants of MR-13, there is a tradition in Guatemala, though not a continuous one, of actions of this nature. In fact, at the time of the unsuccessful coup against President Arévalo in 1949, a general strike took place in Guatemala City. The agricultural laborers joined the strike and, together with the peasants, marched on the city—in trains, trucks, and on foot, armed and ready to quash the coup.

In March-April, 1962, students launched a struggle to overthrow the government. They received some degree of support from workers, limited by the fact that the latter lacked an organizational apparatus through which to participate, and that they were unwilling to accept student leadership. Although the student leaders did not see clearly the objective of the struggle, they called a general strike for the winning of immediate demands and the ousting of Ydígoras from the presidency. The general strike was offered as a slogan capable of uniting the entire population against the dictatorship.

The Guatemalan working class is only partially unionized, and the unions are under leaders who do not oppose the government but follow a policy of negotiation, varying in degree of militancy according to pressure from below. The government is obliged to tolerate the existence of unions and of two union federations, the *Federación Autónoma Sindical de Guatemala* (FASGUA) and the *Consejo Sindical de Guatemala* (CSG), as well as of unaffiliated unions of industrial and agricultural workers.

The "liberationist" counter-revolution of Castillo Armas, whose first act was the mass execution of union leaders, destroyed the *Confederación General del Trabajo de Guatemala* (CGTG) and the *Confederación Nacional Campesina* (CNC), but it could never obliterate the tradition and the experience of the national federated unions of workers and peasants; it is to this experience and this tradition that the *guerrilleros* appeal today.

Workers who are employed in establishments with more than five employees constitute, together with their families, a bare 2.7 percent of the Guatemalan population; another 4.8 percent work in establishments employing fewer than five workers. Landless migratory farm laborers make up eight percent and the "rural proletariat," which includes farm hands of all

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descriptions (some of whom work part-time as farm hands and part-time cultivating a parcel of land of their own) make up another eight percent.

It is with the aim of appealing to these sectors, as well as to artisans and the impoverished urban petty bourgeoisie, that the Guatemalan guerrilla movement builds its program of urban mass struggle culminating in a revolutionary general strike, parallel to peasant warfare. It is not terrorist clashes that will build the bridge between the present stage and a higher stage but organization of workers and students. The guerrilla movement does not expect to organize all or even a majority of them; by its clandestine nature such an organization must, at present, be a vanguard. But such a vanguard, solidly rooted and capable of expressing the demands of the masses through its slogans, can attract the support of all or of the majority of the popular sector at decisive moments.

There is at present a plan to expand revolutionary activities from the highland region where they are now centered to the coffee plantations in the south, which are worked for the most part by migrant labor. From October to December, 200,000 workers from the *tierras frías* [the highlands] go south for the coffee harvest. (Guatemala also has its "wetbacks": 10,000 cross the Mexican border illegally each year to work on the Chiapas coffee plantations.) These hundreds of thousands of rural workers are the living link between one region and another, between the poor and landless peasant and the agricultural proletariat.

There is no political party in Guatemala, legal or semi-legal, that commands authority and prestige among the urban and rural masses. The Peralta Azurdia dictatorship has attempted to offer a false "democratic" solution by setting up an "elective" constitutent assembly, using the device of an election farce in which only those parties authorized by the dictatorship can present candidates, the members of the assembly being chosen by the dictatorship from among the candidates. The Constituent Assembly resolved that elections would be held in September, in order to "reestablish the institutional system" in Guatemala. By law, no Marxist, Socialist, or Communist party may participate in this election. Furthermore, the electoral laws devised by

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the dictatorship stipulate that in order to acquire legal standing, a party must have a minimum of 50,000 members, individually registered by a notary and an electoral judge; this is as if in France or Britain only those parties with a minimum of 700,000 members were eligible to participate in elections! And when we take into account the fact that 83 percent of the Guatemalan population is illiterate, such a demand becomes all the more ludicrous. Not one of the recognized parties can prove a membership of 50,000; not one of them could even attract that many people to a political rally.

The existing legal parties pay their obligations to the dictatorship by providing it with a democratic façade. Neither the *Partido Institucional Democrático* nor the *Movimiento de Liberación* has any following among the population; indeed, they have no existence beyond that which the dictatorship permits them. The *Partido Revolucionario,* which has a "democratic" pro-imperialist program, had its moment of electoral glory after the triumph of the counter-revolution in 1954 and expects to be the beneficiary of "constitutional reestablishment." It offers a "democratic" solution without appearing to be linked to the dictatorship, but its activities have not attracted to it a single important sector of the population.

The *Partido Demócrata Cristiano* decided to abstain in the elections, refusing to gamble its future away by supporting an electoral farce, which is recognized as such by everyone, and in which there is no chance of victory.

To the left of the Christian Democrats among the legal (or semi-legal) parties, is the *Unión Revolucionaria Democrática* (URD), which campaigns on a platform of democratic reforms and appears as the legal political representative of the petty bourgeoisie. It also refused to participate in the election, for the same reasons as the Christian Democrats, recognizing that such an election does not offer a solution, nor a guarantee of "democratic" stability; furthermore, it does not wish to diminish its chance to appear as the focal point of legal, non-guerrilla opposition to the dictatorship.

But all this democratic theorizing has been abruptly terminated. On February 20th, a holiday honoring the national hero Tecún Uman (ruler of the Quiché Indians, who was killed lead-

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ing them in battle against the Spanish *conquistadores*), two guerrilla patrols blew up a truck full of soldiers as it was leaving a parade; elsewhere it attacked a convoy of military trucks. Both actions took place in the very heart of the capital, occasioning no losses for the *guerrilleros*. MR-13 announced that the acts were in reprisal for the many murders of peasants by the army.

A few days later the government once again proclaimed martial law, which had been lifted only one year earlier. Political activities by all parties were ordered suspended, and leaders of the URD—the proponents of a "democratic" solution—were jailed or deported. Martial law is part of the inner struggle among government leaders; one group among them has demanded a tougher policy that would destroy all possibilities of elections; the other maintains that to proclaim a permanent dictatorship is to hasten the government's downfall and to stimulate new support for the guerrilla movement.

The *Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo* (PGT, the Communist Party) does not operate within the sphere of elections or electoral problems; it declares that under present conditions there is no alternative to armed struggle; at the same time it maintains its private contacts and negotiations with the URD. For the PGT the goal of armed guerrilla struggle is the establishment of a national democratic government, with participation of the so-called "four-class bloc" of workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie. Such a government would supposedly democratize and industrialize the country, carry out agrarian democratic reforms, and struggle against imperialist penetration. In other words: a repetition of the Arbenz fiasco.

The PGT's goals separate it from MR-13, which maintains that the objective of the armed struggle carried out under its leadership is to establish a peasants' and workers' government, to overturn capitalism, expel imperialism, arm the working population and organize it in militias, organize workers' and peasants' committees as the base of power in the nation, institute an agrarian revolution, nationalize foreign industries and the principal national industries, establish workers' control in industry, institute a state monopoly of trade, set up alliances with socialist countries—in a word, to take the socialist path of the Cuban revolution, broadened by the experience of the Guatemalan

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revolution. As MR-13 sees it, only the working class in power, allied with the peasantry, can industrialize the country, distribute land, and carry out the democratic measures that the bourgeoisie has been incapable of instituting. To assign a role in the revolution to the national bourgeoisie, or even to foster illusions concerning its "neutralization," only serves to limit the program and objectives of the struggle, and consequently to weaken and confuse the revolutionary forces, all in the name of keeping a non-existent "ally." "The national bourgeoisie has no role in the revolution," MR-13 states, "nor can it govern jointly with workers and peasants." For MR-13, the Arbenz experience was the definitive proof of the failure of national democratic revolution, proof that there is no other road but that of socialist revolution, as in Cuba.

These programmatic differences are decisive in any discussion of unity in Guatemala. " 'Unity' means that we must abandon, conceal, or limit our socialist program?" exclaimed Francisco Amado Granados, a national director of MR-13. He went on to say:

> That's not unity. We appeal to the PGT and to all those opposed to imperialism to form a united front on all points of agreement. Meanwhile, we continue to advance. We cannot accept, in the name of unity, the imposition of the concept of national democratic revolution; we have gone beyond that. We are in complete agreement with the Chinese when they say that unity is good, but first you must know—unity for what? We are for principled unity, not for unity that violates principles. Therefore, since our programmatic objectives differ, we cannot speak of "unity." But we can nonetheless achieve a united front on honest and clear issues of struggle.

MR-13, based on its guerrilla force, affirms that this year will see the adherence of substantial workers' and students' sectors to its ranks and its program; it will also see the consolidation of an urban front of the masses and the broadening of the peasant fronts in the highland areas.

Francisco Amado added this comment:

> We plan to organize underground committees of armed workers and also students similar to those now existing among the peasants; we shall promote trade unionism, legal or underground;

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and we shall prepare the conditions and the mentalities of the masses for a revolutionary workers' *central*. And our slogan, which is already spreading, will become a reality for important sectors of the population: "Workers, peasants, students, arm yourselves!" We are on the threshold of an era of growing workers' and peasants' struggles in Guatemala, stimulated by the struggle and determination of our guerrilla force, and by all that is occurring in the world. Our plan is to help organize these struggles, alongside all those who accept this task, and to prepare conditions for the extension of guerrilla warfare and for the coming uprising of the Guatemalan people.

XI. Interview with the Commander of the Guerrilla Forces

It rained and rained. We had been marching all day in the rain; night had come and it was still raining. That's how it is in the Sierra de las Minas, once it begins raining. With a *machete* as their only tool, the *guerrilleros* had put up a *champa* —a makeshift hut of sod slabs and tree branches held together with *lianas* (twining plants).

Most of the men were sleeping in their hammocks, which were strung up between the trees, each one protected from the rain by a sheet of waterproof nylon stretched overhead. There was no one left in the *champa* but the *guerrillero* on guard duty, Commander Yon Sosa, and me—and a monkey, our next morning's breakfast, caught earlier that day and now skinned and roasting over a fire. Yon Sosa and I talked, not for the first time, about the Guatemalan revolution. That night I decided to make notes. I dug in my pocket, removing a comb, a handkerchief, a bottle of pills, and a can of sardines, until, at the bottom, I found my notebook—somewhat damp—and a pencil. I transcribe my notes here, now that I have been able to dry out my notebook in the sun and decipher its contents. Yon Sosa began our discussion by commenting:

You can't imagine how much progress we've made since a year ago. Now we are able to see our goals much more clearly, and our confidence in ourselves has grown markedly.

Have your forces increased?

Yes. But it's not merely a matter of material strength. The decisive turn occurred when we adopted a program of socialist revolution. True, we were fighting even before, but we suffered

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from confusion in many areas. However, in the process of fighting, living with the peasants, and encountering many frustrations, we reached the conclusion that in Guatemala the only real revolution of the masses that can be made is a socialist revolution. And how we've advanced since reaching that conclusion! A multitude of things that formerly seemed confusing have been clarified. There were *compañeros* who agreed in theory with the need for socialism but who were afraid the peasants would not understand a socialist program and would be frightened off by the idea of such a drastic step. It was they who didn't understand the peasants! To those peasants who are looked to as leaders in their communities the idea of socialist revolution appears to be so simple and logical that they are impatient with anyone who attempts to propose some other solution. This is our strength, and it constitutes not only material strength but also strength of program.

And no one told you that with such a program you would antagonize the bourgeoisie?

Of course we were warned of this eventuality. Everything was done to make us hesitate, to intimidate us. But what convinced us was observing how the peasants responded to our program. The program passed the test of the masses, and from that point on we were adamant. Anyhow, what does it matter what the bourgeoisie says? They're already against us. Have you found a single bourgeois who supports the *guerrilleros* or the militant peasant leaders? And what force does the national bourgeoisie have, anyhow? In Guatemala, none. Furthermore, since we have taken up arms and gone to the mountains, they are more closely linked than ever to imperialism, and more vehemently against us.

And do your differences with the Communists stem from this matter of attitude toward the national bourgeoisie?

That seems to me to be the principal difference, even though there are others. We have discussed many problems with them and, frankly, the *compañeros* in the PGT reason in a way that I don't understand. On the one hand they ask why we attack the national bourgeoisie so sharply, since in Guatemala it is virtually non-existent. Yet on the other hand they say that it is necessary to unite the greatest number of forces possible against

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the principal enemy, imperialism, and that consequently one must win the support of or at least neutralize the national bourgeoisie. In other words, when we attack the bourgeoisie, they say it doesn't exist; it vanishes. But when it is a question of enlisting it as an ally, it seems it really does exist. The peasants are much more down to earth: "The rich are all alike, and we must be rid of all of them," they say.

Yon Sosa took out his *machete* and cut a slice of monkey meat, now done to a turn. He divided it and handed me a piece. "Taste it. But tomorrow you'd better not say that you and I started nibbling at the monkey meat, because the others will put us on trial, and maybe shoot us for violating equality!" He continued:

Look, I don't know much theory, but I'm studying and learning in the struggle. Experience has already taught me that there is a basic difference between these *compañeros* and us: whenever there's a difficult situation we try to solve it through struggle, we try to advance; but *they* are inclined to resolve it through negotiations and agreements. Maybe it's because I'm of *chafa* origin, (*Chafa* comes from *chafarote*, a nickname given to soldiers by Guatemalans) but I believe that things are going to be resolved with arms or not at all. This is not only true now, under the Peralta Azurdia dictatorship; it was true in the time of Arbenz, who ought to have armed the people.

And do you know, these *compañeros* have even reproached me for my military background? One day I received a letter from one of them, reminding me that while I had been in Panama having military training from the imperialists, the Guatemalan students were dying in the streets. The ironic thing about the letter was that at the time I received it I was already putting to good use the little I had learned in Panama—little, because the courses were poor, to tell the truth, and I learned a lot more here in the sierra, fighting against imperialism and in defense of the workers and peasants. There are also some Communist *compañeros,* especially among those who have joined the armed struggle, who may not be in agreement with us in everything but who are convinced that there is no other path but that of socialist revolution.

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Lieutenant-Colonel Augusto Vicente Loarca, another MR-13 leader, was a member of Arbenz's general staff in 1954 and he told me that two days after the Castillo Armas uprising had begun he had said to Arbenz: "Colonel, let's get a thousand men together. It would be easy; and with you at their head, the whole country will rise up." Arbenz said it was too late, there was nothing to be done, and he had already resigned. "If only he had followed my advice, the masses would have crushed Castillo Armas, and we wouldn't have to be doing what we are doing today," Loarca told me. It's no accident that he is taking part in the guerrilla struggle.

Another unusual case is that of still another guerrilla leader, Commander Luis A. Turcios, who had been sent, as a Guatemalan army officer, to take part in the United States "Ranger" training program. "It was a good course," he told me, "especially for training killers. With some of us, their training backfired, and today in the guerrilla movement we're using what we learned with them." But, he added, "military training without political understanding is as useless as a gun with damp ammunition. With it, even a *machete* is enough."

How did you all become socialists?

While we were dodging bullets. It's impossible to fight for very long, side by side with peasants, and not become a socialist. An armed revolution must become a socialist revolution. Which countries, similar to ours, have been able to emerge from backwardness? Cuba, China, North Vietnam, North Korea—they have all taken the socialist path. A backward country cannot advance along the capitalist path, and there is no third alternative. All you have to do is look around and see what's happening in the world. How could we not be for socialism?

But it's not enough to be for the socialist revolution, you have to say so. There are *compañeros* who think that although they themselves can understand it, the masses cannot, and therefore one must not speak of it. This shows lack of confidence in the masses. These *compañeros* think that the peasants are concerned only with problems of crops; whereas peasants today are interested in Cuba, China, the Congo, and everything that's happening in the world. You need only to talk to them to find this out. But you must talk to them in simple language, not

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in abstract formulas; and there's nothing simpler than the idea of a government of workers and peasants.

What do you think about Vietnam?

But why do you ask? You heard the discussion last night with the other *guerrilleros*; you even added your two *centavos* worth! But if you like, I'll answer you as a guerrilla commander to a journalist. I think that the imperialists are a bunch of bastards; you can get rid of them only with guns and that's what the Vietnamese *guerrilleros* are doing. In doing so, they're helping us, however far away they are. And I think that the workers' states have to help the Vietnamese with arms, with soldiers, with everything, if necessary with atomic weapons. The workers' states must give them arms, not permitting themselves to be intimidated by the nuclear blackmail of imperialism; they must also mobilize all the peoples of the world in support of the Vietnamese. We are supporting them, as much as we are able, by attempting to overthrow capitalism in Guatemala and by combating imperialism—not with declarations, but with guns. The Congolese *guerrilleros* are doing the same. When we have a workers' state in Guatemala, you can be sure that we won't equivocate—we shall extend the revolution, helping all the other countries of Latin America to make theirs, if they haven't already done it.

But, won't this bring you into conflict with imperialism?

Do you really want me to answer that question?

You don't think I want the monkey to answer it.

Then I'll answer with some questions of my own. Do you think we're not going to tangle with the imperialists anyhow, not merely after our victory but also before? And do you think that if they're intervening in Vietnam and in the Congo they won't intervene here in Guatemala, whenever they decide that the dictatorship is not doing a good enough job of holding back the revolution? And aren't they intervening already? And didn't they intervene, when Arbenz was removed? And are we going to fool them by pretending to be moderates? If they don't finish us off now it's because they're unable to; and if they don't liquidate us when we're on the verge of winning power or already in power, it will also be because they're unable. And the more support we have from the peoples of Latin America,

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the less able they'll be. And the more we support the struggles of other Latin Americans, the more they'll support ours. Conflict with imperialism? We're under no illusions: they'll intervene as much as they can, more than in Cuba, as much as in Vietnam. But, as in Vietnam, things will go badly for them. We must spell out our ideas on this subject; we must not be evasive nor sow illusions among the masses, for this would destroy their confidence in us.

What is the position of MR-13 on the guerrilla movements of Latin America?

At the national meeting of our Movement, held recently in the mountains, we approved the Declaration of the Sierra de las Minas, in which we invited the guerrilla movements of Venezuela and Colombia to a joint guerrilla conference, to be held in any of our three countries, in guerrilla-held territory. We are prepared to convene such a conference here in the Sierra de las Minas, or alternatively we would also be willing to send delegates to the Venezuelan or Colombian mountains. We believe that revolutionary organizations that advocate armed struggle could be invited from other Latin American countries; but our three movements, veterans of the armed struggle, would be the core of the conference. It would be most helpful to share experiences with our fellow *guerrilleros* from Venezuela and Colombia and to discuss perspectives. It would be good if *guerrillero* representatives could come from Vietnam, the Congo, "Portuguese" Guinea, from all countries where armed struggle is taking place. And we could issue a joint declaration addressed to all the revolutionary peoples and movements of Latin America and of the world, appealing for their support for the guerrilla movements of our countries and for a great Latin American front against imperialism.

And what else?

If you're going to write all that, please add this at the end: say that not only do we ask for support from our Cuban, Venezuelan, and Colombian *compañeros*. We also ask it of the Socialist and Communist *compañeros* in Chile; the nationalist *compañeros* in Brazil; the Uruguayans; the Argentine *Peronista compañeros*; the miners' unions and the peasants of Bolivia; the revolutionaries of Peru, Ecuador, Mexico, all Central Ameri-

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ca; all the workers, peasants, revolutionaries of our continent. We ask that they spread the word about our struggle, that they defend our prisoners, that they condemn the dictatorship of Peralta Azurdia—with its repression of the Guatemalan peasants and workers, its jails and its tortures. Outside Latin America, the solidarity of the socialist and progressive forces of the United States, Europe, Asia, and Africa, is of utmost importance to us. After all, we face the same enemy.

Our country is small and our movement is young, but a country is no longer small, once it is fighting, arms in hand, for its liberation. Write that the Guatemalan revolution did not end in 1954; it survives in the underground struggles in the towns and in the mountain villages; write that we send our greetings and offer our solidarity to all the Latin American masses who are struggling for the same goals as we; and write that Guatemala is moving toward socialism and Guatemala will not falter.

The fire was flickering, the rain was still falling. The *compañero* on guard duty reminded us that we would have to be up at dawn, ready to continue our march. A few minutes later I was stretched out in my hammock, asleep, as the rain pelted down on the waterproof nylon sheet.

XII. Interview with Evaristo Aldana

"Get your shoes on, man! If the shooting starts around here, a barefooted man is as good as dead!" It was Yon Sosa who shouted these words of advice to me, while he cleaned his machine-gun. I was sitting on the bank of a mountain stream, in which some of us had just had a dip while others kept a look-out. Waiting for my shirt to dry in the faint glimmers of sun that filtered through the tall trees, I hadn't bothered to put my shoes on. However, Yon Sosa's advice had a certain persuasiveness and I followed it, without interrupting my conversation with Evaristo Aldana, an MR-13 leader. We were waiting to resume our march but there seemed to be some delay, and I decided to tape-record our talk, which I reproduce here.

Can you tell me about the internal organization of the guerrillas?

In the first place, we organized what we call a "center"

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for our guerrilla unit (the Alejandro de León Front). This "center" constitutes the directorate. We then organized "groups"; each member of the "center" is active in his "group" and responsible for it. The position of "group" leader is a rotating one. In organizing a "group" we take into account such factors as the literacy of its members, level of political discussion, and military potential. This system has produced excellent results.

Can you tell me more about the "center"?

As I've said, it is equivalent to a directorate, providing military and political leadership for the Front. Experience has taught us that the functioning of "groups," and consequently of the Front as a whole, depends on the functioning of the "center." The positions of responsibility in the "center" are held by *compañeros* who, in action and discussion, show the greatest determination to move ahead, the highest degree of responsibility, and the finest collective spirit.

And does this directorate receive special treatment, privileges not granted to the other guerrilleros?

Absolutely not. Only greater responsibility for providing continuous impetus for the Movement and its struggle. Given the tasks that we must fulfill and the conditions under which the struggle is developing, we are obliged to base ourselves on what is called "democratic centralism." We cannot subject ourselves to "pure democracy" (*democraticismo*), nor to the more backward sectors of the masses and the Movement; we must base ourselves on those sectors possessing the highest determination, and the greatest degree of understanding and boldness. This does not mean that we disregard the *compañeros* and the sectors of the masses whose understanding is still limited. They will advance and mature by observing the resolution in action of those having greater comprehension and sense of purpose. But there is no question of privilege for the most advanced *compañeros,* only bigger tasks and obligations.

How does the directorate influence and lead the guerrilla unit as a whole?

In many ways, but principally in two. One way is by setting an example in our military operations and in the seemingly routine daily tasks, such as gathering wood and preparing meals. The other way is through political discussion; we've

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made good progress in this area. As you can see, the social composition of our unit is 90 percent peasant. The majority of them came to us not knowing how to read or write; with us they have learned or they are learning. A few days ago we held a discussion on the subject of a workers' and peasants' government, what it should be. I made notes on some of the answers. (Evaristo searched in his knapsack and took out a notebook, wrapped in waterproof nylon.)

They said that such a government should institute, first of all, agrarian reform and land distribution—more precisely, "the land should be liberated." This did not necessarily mean that they wanted the land to be parcelled; they had had an experience with parcelling during the Arbenz regime, and it had been, to a large extent, a failure.

Some of the peasant *guerrilleros* spoke of the need to work the land collectively, so that both good land and poor would be equally shared; this would eliminate privilege and avoid friction and envy among the peasants themselves

One person said that a workers' and peasants' government should "organize and unite all the peasants to make them strong." Another one added that "such a government must be protected by peasants and workers, and there must be mutual confidence between them and their government."

Still another said that unity must be safeguarded by a program and by advancing toward a socialist revolution, "without privileges for anyone and with equality for all." Someone pointed out that Arbenz should have dissolved the army and that our workers' and peasants' government must remove the existing state apparatus and give arms to workers and peasants. Other opinions were aired, all of them along the same general lines. These *compañeros* talk with and pass their ideas on to the other peasants; and they themselves are heartened when they see how warmly their words are received.

Has the present government intensified its campaign against the guerrilla force?

Well, now they're trying a dual approach, consisting of repressive measures accompanied by offers of aid to the peasants. On the one hand, they continue their usual persecution in the villages, burning huts and crops; raping peasant girls; beating,

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torturing, and murdering men and women. However they've inflicted very few casualties on the *guerrilleros*. César—do you remember him?—was the last; they killed him in the most dastardly way, when he was unarmed.

(César had been our guide, who led us to the guerrilla encampment when we first arrived. When the unit began its march through the mountains he left us to go home to his village, where he was killed.)

At the same time, they're making offers to the peasants. Not long ago three high ranking officers—colonels, I think—arrived in a certain village with a detachment of soldiers. They called a meeting of all the inhabitants of the area, threatening to accuse anyone who was absent of being a *guerrillero*. At the meeting they offered the peasants money and cattle and spoke of the land problem. They asked that a list be drawn up of those who wanted money and cattle and those who wanted land. They said the government was concerned with the needs of the peasants and that the latter should not allow themselves to be misled by those wily scoundrels, the *guerrilleros,* who were really the peasants' worst enemies. The officers and their men left the village, announcing that they would return in a few days to collect the list they had requested.

What did the peasants say to all of this?

That's the best part of the story! The villagers, as soon as the call had gone out for the meeting, decided they weren't interested in anything the government had to say; they weren't going to believe a word of it anyhow. And furthermore the offers were being made for the purpose of undermining the revolution. They said: "The government knows its time is running out, it's fighting a losing battle; so, in desperation they've come to us with this drivel." Others commented that before the appearance of the *guerrilleros* in the area the government had never made such an offer; clearly the whole point was to stave off an uprising. Someone pointed out that peasants in other provinces would hear of the offers made to us and they would then demand their share; we, of course, would support them in their demands. Since the government would not make good on its offer, the whole maneuver would be exposed as phony, and this would really queer its act.

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What happened at the meeting?

For the government it was a flop. For us it was a resounding victory, not only because of the general conclusions drawn by the people but also because of their reactions to the committees. Some of our sympathizers had sent word that they wanted us to advise them on the question of the government's "offer," adding that they themselves were inclined not to attend the meeting nor to accept any offers from the government.

We discussed the matter in our guerrilla "groups" and a meeting of the "center" was called, which, after a discussion, reached certain conclusions. Patrols then went out to talk with the villagers and to make contact with their committees. It had been agreed that we would advise the peasants to attend the government-called meeting, simply to find out what was going on; we also advised them to reject the offer of money and cattle and to demand that land be given to them, with no strings attached. We warned them that these were merely promises that would not be kept. We also told them that if any individual chose to accept the offer of money and cattle, we were not opposed, so long as the offer was made unconditionally.

When all the patrols had returned to our camp we held a meeting. Everyone was enthusiastic about the peasants' response to our suggestions and we concluded that we were a real force in the province, that we had won widespread popular support, and that organization of the peasantry is of supreme importance if we are to strike effectively at the enemy. It seemed clear that had we recommended that no one attend the meeting, they would have followed our advice. However, it was not yet the right time for such a challenge to be made, even though we had the social strength to do so.

In the course of the discussion we asked that each *guerrillero* give his opinion and draw his conclusions. One *compañero* reported that he thought that the peasants should accept the *pisto* [the dough] and the cattle, saying that if he were back in "private life" he would take the money, buy a pistol with it, and join the guerrillas, to whom he would also present the cow! Others said that it would be a good idea to accept anything that might be given, because in the end we were going to win; even if the government was now offering deals, it was a matter

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of "giving away the chicken wing, in order to keep the breast," but eventually they'd have to give up the whole hen. One of the *compañeros* said that it was clear to him that whatever the government gave away was most likely something they had originally robbed from the peasants or workers.

Is that what you people call duality of power, or dual power?

Yes. But it's not we who have power and authority, it's the peasants. We are, as it were, their conscious instrument. On the one hand there's the power of the government and the army; on the other, the power of the peasants, that is, of the committees and the guerrillas. We are continuing to expand the committees, because they are the basis of peasant power. This was evident in the episode I've just recounted, and in many others. But this power is not self-propelling; it needs the support of the guerrilla force. And we, the *guerrilleros,* must have the support of the committees. The guerrilla force functions in certain respects like a party that leads, but we are also organizing MR-13 among the peasants and in their committees, to give them added political force and vitality. If we are to fulfill the objectives to which we are committed, a socialist program is indispensable; without it we could not possibly organize the committees. The committee is a form of organization for struggle, a united front; it is also an embryonic form of mass political power. The committee has a class character, and we have discussed and overcome errors that were bound to arise in an organization such as the committees, comprising both poor and rich peasants.

How does the future look to you?

Excellent. We have taken root among the peasants and, come hell or high water, no one can uproot us. We're planning to expand our activities very soon. For example, in a short time we expect to have guerrilla units operating all through the highlands and in all the provinces. But, above all, we're going to saturate this area with peasant committees and *milicianos.* Experience has shown us that the organizational forms that we've been developing fully meet the needs of the struggle. And our socialist program, as it catches on among the masses, will move with the power and speed of a locomotive.

Do you think these experiences are valid for other countries?

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I'm positive that they are. We've learned a great deal from the activities of peasants and workers of other countries: Bolivia, China, Cuba, Brazil, Colombia, among others. We would like to hold discussions with the Venezuelan and Colombian *compañeros,* and we have therefore proposed a conference of *guerrilleros* from our three countries. This would provide new impetus for the struggle and would encourage new guerrilla and other mass actions against capitalism in other countries. Conditions are ripe and if the socialist program and the organization of the peasantry in committees and militias have caught on so successfully in Guatemala, it should be all the easier in other countries that have had longer experience in guerrilla struggle than we and are already on the brink of armed revolution. Therefore, the idea of the conference has been received with enthusiasm by all the *compañeros* in our unit; we assume that there will have been an equally enthusiastic response among all the other guerrilla units, and we plan to hold the conference sometime this year.

SERVICES RENDERED

BY ANDREW GUNDER FRANK

Shortages of capital for domestic investment, balance-of-payments deficits, and of course growing indebtedness to foreign governments and their international organizations are commonplace in the underdeveloped countries today. One source of these problems is the outflow on capital account from the poor underdeveloped countries to the rich developed ones, a subject which was treated in these pages by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy in their editorial, "Foreign Investment" (MR, January 1965), by Philip Reno in his "Aluminum Profits and Caribbean People" (MR, October 1963), and by myself in "On the Mechanisms of Imperialism: The Case of Brazil" (MR, September 1964).

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These studies emphasize the underdeveloping effects of foreign investment through its net withdrawal of capital from the underdeveloped countries and through the economic, political, and social consequences of its operation in the underdeveloped countries.

These problems have other sources as well which, though part of the same story, are less often discussed. The accompanying table glaringly illuminates another of these sources which also has its proper place in the total capitalist structure and in the exploitative relationship it imposes between the metropolis and its satellites within the imperialist system. The table raises the questions: How much service? And who renders services to whom? The perhaps surprising answer to the first question is that Latin America, which is notoriously poor and hard put to import enough goods to keep its capitalist economy going, let alone to develop it, *is forced to spend over 60 percent of its entire foreign exchange earnings on services alone.* Moreover, this outflow of funds from Latin America on service account is growing over time both absolutely and relative to the amount of its foreign exchange earnings from the export of goods and services. As the Total Payments of the table shows, from 1956-60 to 1961-1963 the average yearly payments by Latin America on service account rose from $5 billion to $6 billion per year and from 53 percent to 61 percent of Latin America's total earnings. If we imagine an international system in which Latin America and other underdeveloped areas supply the largest part of these services to themselves instead of being obliged to use their scarce foreign exchange for the purpose, it is not difficult to answer the second question and to see who really renders services to whom.

As the table shows, profits remitted to foreign enterprises and service on the foreign debt (interest and amortization) absorb 30 percent of Latin America's foreign exchange earnings. The dubious value to Latin America of these particular "services" is discussed in the articles cited above. But the table also shows that other "services" which are usually less subject to attention and propaganda (and which are not usually added up as in this table) absorb another 30 percent, or fully as much again, of Latin America's foreign exchange earnings. Among these,

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Latin America (Except Cuba)
Yearly Averages

	Years 1956-60		1961-63	
	Millions of Dollars	*Percent*	*Millions of Dollars*	*Percent*
A. Earnings of Foreign Exchange for Goods and Services	9246	100	10,148	100
B. Payments of Foreign Exchange for Services				
1. Transport and Insurance	906	9.8	980	9.9
2. Profits Remitted[a]	1262	13.6	1420	14.1
3. Debt Service	1082	11.6	1594	15.8
4. Travel	491	5.2	584	5.7
5. Other Services	656	7.1	560	5.6
6. Donations	123	1.3	158	1.5
7. Transferred Funds	51	0.5	571	5.8
8. Errors and Omissions[b]	373	4.0	286	2.8
TOTAL PAYMENTS	4944	53.0	6154	61.0

NOTES:

a. It is important to realize that this measure, and therefore total payments, underestimates the real amount of capital outflow through profits earned by foreign firms. An additional significant part of their profits appears in company profit-and-loss statements and therefore in national balance-of-payments accounts under the label of "goods." These international corporations regularly over- and under-bill their sales between the home office and subsidiaries or clients abroad to avoid American and foreign profits taxes and exchange controls. They also make fictitious charges for high-salaried technical personnel who supposedly impart "know how" in the production of goods. In a word, international corporations deliberately hide their profits under the rubric "production costs" of goods.

b. "Errors and Omissions" is a common category in balance-of-payments accounts. The United Nations document, from which these data are taken, comments: "Usually, negative errors and omissions are in all probability part of the item of capital operations and are not apparently due to an overestimation of inflow of capital but rather to an underestimation of outflow of capital."

SOURCE:

Computed from United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America, *Estudio Economico de America Latina 1963,* E/CN.12/696/Rev. 1, New York, 1964, pp. 238-247. This document in turn cites the International Monetary Fund, *Balance of Payments,* Vols. 12, 13, 14, and 15 as its principal source.

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transportation costs absorb a third or a respectable 10 percent of the total. When, to reduce these losses, little Uruguay recently sought to reserve a greater share of its cargo for its own shipping, the United States retaliated with political pressure and the threat of an economic boycott. The attempt by various countries to establish a common Latin American fleet to supplement their other economic integration measures has been met by the strongest of American political and economic opposition.

As for the American government and its own balance of payments crisis, President Johnson is encouraging American capitalists to bring home more capital from abroad as quickly as possible. That is, he is urging American monopolies to increase still further Latin America's capital losses.

It is no wonder that Latin America is short of capital and unable to import enough machinery and other goods if it has less than 40 percent of its foreign exchange earnings available for such imports. It is no wonder, either, that Latin America has a chronic balance-of-payments deficit and that to cover it and necessary imports, the countries of the area are forced to go ever deeper into debt.* But this foreign borrowing, of course, far from helping to solve the problem only aggravates it in the long run. It aggravates it directly, as the table shows, in that servicing this debt cost Latin America $1 billion and accounted for 11.6 percent of its foreign exchange earnings in 1956-1960; but it cost $1.5 billion and absorbed 15.8 percent of total foreign earnings by 1961-1963—and the figures are still rising. Borrowing also aggravates the problem indirectly, as my above-cited article notes, since the foreign loans come with political and economic strings attached which bind Latin American productive capacity to, and increase its dependence on, the metropolis still further. And at the same time Latin America earns less and less for the goods it exports. Thus, between 1950-1954 and 1962-1963, Latin America lost another 25 percent of its export earnings through the deterioration of its terms of trade. But that is another part of the well-woven story: more services rendered.

* In addition, it is important to note that of the 40 percent of foreign earnings available to import goods, about half is eaten up by fuels and non-durable goods, both of which could and should be produced in much larger volume domestically.

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THE QUALITY OF CHINA'S SOCIALISM

BY CHARLES BETTELHEIM

This is the concluding part of a lecture delivered in Paris by Professor Bettelheim after his return from a trip to China in the autumn of 1964. A teacher of economics at the Sorbonne, Professor Bettelheim is one of the world's leading authorities on economic planning. He has written many works on the subject, including a book dealing specifically with the Soviet system. He has participated in drawing up plans for India, Cuba, and Guinea, and has been consulted by many other governments and planning experts. His 1964 trip to China was his second in six years. The translation is by Joan Pinkham.—*The Editors*

It is obviously impossible in a short space to examine all the specific characteristics of socialism in China. I shall therefore restrict my remarks to two points which appear to me to be particularly significant, namely, the great importance placed on the initiative of the masses, and the leading role played by ideology.

In economic construction, the principle of close liaison with the masses takes concrete form through a broad appeal to the initiative of the lowest echelons. The practical forms given to economic planning, to the management of enterprises in the state sector, and to the organization of the people's communes, are designed precisely to give the widest scope to the initiative of the masses. A particularly important point in this connection is the way in which each unit of production prepares its own draft plan, without receiving quantitative directives from higher authorities. This procedure allows the maximum opportunity for the lower levels to show initiative. Of course, a constant effort must be made to give such initiative a correct orientation, and this is achieved through large-scale dissemination and explanation of the general economic line and the directives issued by the central authorities of the CPC.

During the last few years, initiative has been especially mobilized by the slogan "develop on your own." Actually, this slogan has a twofold meaning. First of all, it applies to the directing bodies, including the Planning Commission. For them, it means that the general economic policy must be based on self-

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reliance. This has become particularly important since the withdrawal of Soviet aid in 1960, because from that time on China has been obliged to develop its economy without outside assistance of any kind, technical, financial, or commercial. (China has not only done so, it has even repaid at an increasing rate loans received in previous years. It is thus the first country which, starting from such a low level of economic development, has continued to develop by its own powers and has been able in addition to repay its previous obligations.)

I should add that from the point of view of the leaders, the slogan "develop on your own" also implies certain broad economic policy objectives. It implies that a balance should be achieved between imports and exports; that only those investment projects should be launched that can presently be completed with China's own technical resources; and, ultimately, that all necessary research be undertaken to enable the country to carry out future projects without resorting to outside technical aid. At the same time, it must be emphasized that this does not by any means imply that China seeks to be self-sufficient in all areas, without recourse to external trade. On the contrary, China is making a constant effort to develop foreign trade.

The second meaning of the slogan "develop on your own" —that is, the mass meaning—warrants particular discussion. As applied to the masses, the slogan means that each unit of production should seek the maximum increase in output without resorting to state aid. This in turn implies two things: First, that every enterprise, and particularly every state enterprise, should reduce to the minimum its financial demands on the state and on the banking system. And second, that every enterprise should try to improve its own production by its own means, especially by introducing innovations and by rehabilitating old or worn-out machines.

One might think that increases in production to be obtained in this way would be very limited. In reality, that is not the case at all. Quite the contrary, on the basis of broad mass initiative each factory manages to realize substantial increases in production with little or no state aid. Indeed, the older its equipment and the more in need of technical improvements, the greater increase does the factory usually achieve.

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As an example of the technical renovation of a factory "on its own," I should like to describe the case of the Wia-tang truck factory of Shanghai. Before the Liberation, it was not a real factory, but just a garage that repaired buses for an English company. The garage was nationalized in 1949, at which time it employed 50 workers. After nationalization, it was converted into a shop for the repair and rehabilitation of worn-out trucks, and for the manufacture of spare truck parts. This was accomplished by using the machine tools available in the shop and by creating a foundry. Little by little, the shop was transformed into a factory by renovating the stock of machine tools and increasing it somewhat. This last was done partly by collecting old parts of machine tools abandoned elsewhere. Thus, by 1957, the shop with 50 employees had become a small factory employing 270 workers, who were already doing major repairs on trucks. In fact, they were even rehabilitating very old trucks which had served for twenty or thirty years and which now helped to overcome the difficulties caused by the blockade.

In 1958, the year of the Great Leap Forward, the activity of the factory was further expanded. After wide discussion within the factory, it was decided to pass from repairing to manufacturing. The transition was very difficult. With the help of engineers and technicians, the workers organized themselves into small groups for study and research. They were given supplementary technical and theoretical training either in evening classes or through visits to other factories. Little by little, concrete suggestions were made regarding the various methods of manufacture. From 1958 to 1964, more than 5,000 such suggestions were submitted. As a result of this process, the factory was able to begin manufacturing the principal parts necessary for the production of trucks, such as motor cylinder-heads, transmission shafts, and so forth. At the same time, the factory trained six engineers and sixteen technicians. When I visited it in October 1964, it employed more than 900 workers divided into four shops: a casting shop, an engine shop, a body shop, and a shop for the manufacture of driving controls. Forty percent of the installations had been planned and constructed by the workers themselves. Today the factory produces four-ton trucks with 90 horsepower. In 1963 it produced 570 trucks; and in 1964 its

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plan, which at the time of my visit was well on the way to fulfillment, was to produce 700. Some of the operations are still mechanized only to a very small degree, but the quality of the output seems to be good, and on an average the trucks are given a complete overhaul only after 70,000 kilometers of service. When I visited the factory, it was preparing to launch a new model of its own design, and was making plans to produce a motor coach in cooperation with other factories. I saw a prototype of the motor coach, and it was a comfortable and modern vehicle.

This is a concrete example of what the slogan "develop on your own" means in practice, at the level of a factory. The state, of course, helped to develop the factory, but the major effort came from the workers themselves.

I think such an example also helps us to understand the role that ideology plays in socialist construction in China. Ideology is not thought of as a negation of material incentive. On the contrary, such incentive constitutes the basis for everyday activity, and is reflected in an eight-step wage scale for the workers, and in the system of premiums. But the Chinese are not counting on material incentive to bring about innovations and technical improvements, or to stimulate rapid economic progress. Nor are they counting on material incentive to induce each person to undertake all the extra-professional work asked of him—advanced technical study, for example. For these things, they rely chiefly on political consciousness. This is a very important element in the basic approach of the Chinese Communist Party, and one that has far-reaching implications. For one thing, it implies that a constant effort must be made to explain to each individual what is expected of him, and to combat tendencies toward laziness, routine effort, and self-satisfaction. For another, it implies that every means must be employed to make the new ideals of socialism penetrate the masses and to eliminate behavior and attitudes inherited from the past. It also implies a constant struggle against bureaucracy, against the tendency to give orders instead of to explain, and against the separation of manual work from intellectual work. Indeed, it is only under these conditions that the masses can really arrive at a socialist ideology.

Finally, what the Chinese are trying to do is not only to develop their productive forces but, at the same time, to create

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a new man. For that is one of the profound objectives of a socialist revolution.

It is obviously very difficult for a foreigner who has spent only a few weeks in China, and who does not speak the language, to say to what extent such an objective is being attained. But I think one thing is certain: on the level of economic achievement, the orientation of the Chinese Communist Party has made it possible to obtain undeniable and perfectly visible results. I think another thing is equally certain: judging from conversations, from visits to factories and communes, from observation of the high degree of organization and the style of daily life, behavior of a socialist type is being born. At this stage it is probably too soon to speak of a new man, but it seems to me that there are signs of a profound evolution in this direction.

In conclusion, I want to comment on another aspect of the way of life being created in China, which, if it continues to grow, seems to me to hold great promise for the future. I refer to the effort being made to integrate the activity of each individual into a collective creative endeavor. This gives to everyday life, and especially to work, a significance that goes beyond individual limits. Indeed, in the end, it gives work a new meaning. Henceforth, work is no longer just an activity to which one is condemned in order to earn a living, but an activity that has a meaning in itself and subjectively enriches the individual. This is also very important in order to prevent material incentive from being overemphasized, and above all, to prevent consumption from becoming the almost exclusive end of human activity, as is the tendency in the advanced capitalist countries. This tendency signifies the appearance of a new form of alienation: the subjection of man to objects and the ceaseless quest for the new object, which has nothing to do with increased satisfaction of real needs but which means, on the contrary, a constant growth of needs to consume, constantly unsatisfied. If China succeeds in developing an industrial society in which man, while seeking a better life, does not see his fundamental activity as consumption, but as creation, the Chinese revolution will have given all countries a perspective of development far more enriching than that offered by the American way of life. I have the impression that China has made a good start along this road.

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

The World Power

The United States is *the* World Military Power.

President Johnson said this unequivocally in his January 1965 State of the Union and Defense Messages to Congress. Defense Secretary McNamara repeats the assertion every time he makes a public appearance. Interviewed by *U.S. News & World Report* (April 12, 1965) the Secretary reasserted that weaponry is the major source of that power.

Question. In what field does American dominance mainly lie?

Answer. Across the whole range of power, actually. . . . Strategic nuclear superiority is the absolute foundation of our deterrent power.

Question. Does the U.S. command the seas?

Answer. Oh, without question. I don't think anybody disputes that. And there's no doubt about control of the air, either.

Question. How about small guerrilla ground operations?

Answer. We've increased about eight-fold the strength of our counter-insurgency forces in the last three or four years. It's through that increase that we have been able to respond in Southeast Asia.

Unquestionably Washington has the big guns and has the personnel trained to use them. Even massive military power has its limits, however. It cannot coerce a single member of the armed forces against his will, or a single human being. It cannot suppress Fidel Castro or curb General De Gaulle, let alone the peoples of Asia and Africa.

It may retard the transition from the 19th century emphasis on competition and death to 20th century emphasis on cooperation and survival, as it did in Brazil in April 1964 and in the Congo and British Guiana in 1964-65. In Cuba massive power has not won out. It failed in China in 1949; in Korea in 1953; in Indo China in 1954. It was fought to a standstill in Vietnam in 1964-65. It was having another test in Santo Domingo in the opening days of May 1965.

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If modern weaponry is the chief source of massive power, there must be other parallel factors operating. Otherwise Washington's stockpiles of death-dealing hardware would have converted all doubters and opponents into nuclear debris before this.

Barron's on Brazil

Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly of April 19, 1965 published a front page "Salute to Brazil." The Editors said that Malaysia is standing its ground; "law and order are gradually gaining the upper hand" in the Congo; "most noteworthy of all is Brazil, which just a year ago overthrew the corrupt, Communist-riddled government of Joao (Jango) Goulart. . . . In the ceaseless struggle between East and West, Brazil signifies a turning point. By seizing power from the totalitarian Goulart regime, the Brazilian military, with the overwhelming support of the man in the street, prevented the establishment of a massive Communist colony on the mainland of South America."

Brazil is a sovereign state, with its established constitution and its legal system. The Goulart Government was duly elected by the Brazilian citizenry. Actively assisted by United States Government representatives, the Brazilian armed forces violated their oath to uphold the Constitution, took matters into their own hands, overthrew the duly elected government and shot, jailed or exiled thousands of elected representatives of the Brazilian people. It was this victory of the army, rebelling against the legally established government, that Barron's hailed in its "Salute to Brazil."

Super-Sovereignty in Action

Western oligarchies (businessmen, military leaders, politicians and manufacturers of public opinion) are developing a concept of super-sovereignty that replaces the principle of popular sovereignty and the prevailing idea that each sovereign nation has "supreme and independent authority" (*Webster's* definition of sovereignty).

Except in theory, modern national sovereignty has never been either "supreme" or "independent." After major wars,

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defeated nations have been annexed by their conquerors, partitioned among the victors, subjected to the payment of reparations and otherwise deprived of their sovereign authority.

Imperialism presupposes limitations imposed by the imperial power upon its colonies and dependencies, some of them former sovereign states. These limitations may involve imperial control of defense, foreign policy, finances, trade, travel.

Aside from restrictions imposed by victors upon the vanquished, or by the imperial power upon its subordinate political units, the growth of nationalism has carried with it the idea that independence and political, economic and cultural self-determination are the chief features of national statehood.

Gradually, step by step, another principle has been introduced into modern international relations: the principle of super-sovereignty.

Washington, by a unilateral declaration in 1823, warned sovereign powers of that day that any attempt by a European nation to impose its will upon an American state would be regarded by the United States Government as an unfriendly and perhaps a hostile act. This Monroe Doctrine was not announced after consultation with representatives of the sovereign Latin American nations affected by the Doctrine. It was thought up in London, sold to Washington, and proclaimed by the President as the policy which governed the southern half of the Western Hemisphere.

Under the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 Washington has used political and economic pressure, sometimes involving the dispatch of warships and the landing of marines, to pressure Latin American governments into conformity with Washington policies. Acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine involved definite limitations on the sovereign rights of 20 Latin American governments. Touchy Latin Americans resented their status as second-class members of the Organization of American States. But during recent years they have swallowed their pride on many occasions and bowed to super-sovereign power.

At the war's end in 1945 Washington not only held a monopoly of the atom bomb, but it patrolled the Atlantic and the Pacific and, after 1947, also the Mediterranean. Washington's Strategic Air Command controlled the air approaches to

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Western Europe and large United States armed forces were quartered in important European countries, including Britain, Germany, France and Italy. Necessities of defense and strategy were advanced to justify Washington's leading role in Marshall Plan aid and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Western nations were sovereign in legal theory, but their sovereignty was supplemented and overlaid by the superior wealth-power potential, the super-sovereignty of the United States.

Reconnaisance over-flights (air space invasions), photographing and mapping the territory of sovereign states, were practiced by Washington and justified on this same principle. When President Eisenhower was caught red-handed by the shooting down of a U-2 plane over Soviet territory he justified the practice by saying: "We simply had to find out what those people were doing."

In 1947 Washington made another assault upon the sovereignty of every nation on earth by declaring that any attempt from within or without to extend communism in any nation would be regarded as an unfriendly act and would be treated as aggression by the Washington Government. This was an extension of the Monroe Doctrine principle to the entire planet, with Washington (not the North Atlantic Community or the United Nations) acting as judge, jury and executioner. Under this principle, Peoples' China was isolated and blockaded, Cuba was invaded and quarantined, North Vietnam was branded an aggressor and bombed by Washington's forces month after month in 1964 and 1965.

In April-May 1965, United States marines were landed in Santo Domingo "to protect United States citizens and their property" and to prevent Castro sympathizers from taking over the Dominican Government. Under the Organization of American States Charter any invasion of one American state by the armed forces of another state is illegal. Pleading super-necessity, Washington, on its own initiative, ordered its armed forces into Santo Domingo.

Santo Domingo had been politically unstable since its duly elected President Juan D. Bosch was exiled and replaced by a council of Dominican military leaders. Efforts to restore civilian rule in Santo Domingo and to bring back President Bosch from

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Puerto Rico, where he had been living in exile, sparked the conflict which began during the last days of April 1965. By Sunday, May 2, the eighth day of the Dominican insurrection, United States military authorities had landed 9,500 marines and paratroopers who took over from the interim Dominican Government the front lines facing the pro-Bosch insurgents.

In his statement on Sunday, May 2, the President announced that he had ordered 4,500 additional military personnel into the country. This decision was made on information which convinced the White House that a revolution dedicated to social justice had been seized by "a band of communist conspirators." "The revolution is now in other and dangerous hands," the President said. While José A. More, Secretary General of the Organization of American States and his five-man O.A.S. peace commission proceeded with its efforts to establish a cease-fire, President Johnson and his advisors organized and directed their military invasion of the Dominican Republic.

The Cuban Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 had been an amateur affair, foredoomed to failure. The Dominican invasion of May 1965 was carried out by a fleet of warships, equipped with planes, helicopters and other military hardware that was able to land some 15,000 United States military personnel and their equipment in the course of a few hours.

Over the entire Western Hemisphere—Guatemala, Cuba, Brazil, Santo Domingo—United States interests come first. This is the Monroe Doctrine in its present-day form. That which benefits United States interests is good for Latin America; that which harms United States interests is bad for Latin America.

But the Monroe Doctrine axiom: "The United States and her interests come first" is not confined to the Western Hemisphere. Recently it has been extended to include not only North Atlantic Treaty Organization areas, but those parts of Africa and Asia such as the Congo and Indo-China, in which the United States has special interests. President Johnson made the position crystal clear in his televised press conference on April 27, 1965 when he explained Washington's position in Vietnam. "We are engaged in a crucial struggle in Vietnam. Some may consider it a small war, but . . . the stakes are high. . . . Our own welfare, our own freedom would be in great danger. . . .

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To stand firm is the only guarantee of a lasting peace."

Basing his decision to extend the Vietnam war on these premises, President Johnson abandoned the fiction that the 20,000 United States military personnel in South Vietnam were merely advisors, moved United States units into combat, assigned larger funds for the war, landed additional United States troops and equipment, and inaugurated the policy of bombing military installations and supplies across the 17th parallel in North Vietnam.

Bombing a sovereign state is aggression. Under ordinary circumstances it would be considered an act of war. Continued bombing of a sovereign state would be looked upon as a provocation designed to force war upon an unwilling opponent. North Vietnam is a sovereign state. The bombing of North Vietnam is to be carried on systematically by the Washington military authorities until Washington is satisfied that North Vietnam has ceased its alleged aggressions against South Vietnam.

President Johnson does not represent the United Nations or any other duly constituted international body. He holds neither warrant nor mandate to lay down the law in Southeast Asia. As Commander-in-Chief of the United States armed forces, he sent his planes, helicopters, tanks and guns into Vietnam because United States interests and United States policies required such acts.

These episodes mark the development and current practices of the principle of super-sovereignty. The common-garden-variety nations have sovereign rights of course; they enjoy independence and self-determination. But if, in their sovereign practices, they transgress United States interests, Washington will warn, threaten, cut off aid, isolate, blockade, invade and, when necessary, bomb the installations of the recalcitrant.

This is super-sovereignty in action.

STUDIES IN A DYING COLONIALISM
by Frantz Fanon with an introduction by Adolfo Gilly
describes the revolution in the lives of the Algerian people during their struggle for national liberation.
To be published by MR Press September 15, 1965
Price on publication: $4.95 Pre-publication price: $3.50

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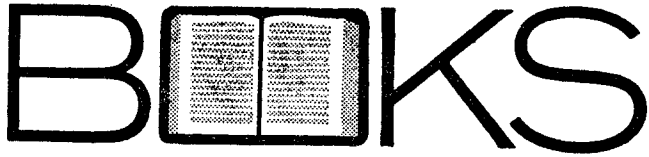

TECHNIQUE AND SOCIETY

BY DAVID HOROWITZ

The Technological Society, by Jacques Ellul, 449 pp., Knopf, 1964, $10.95. With a Foreword by Robert K. Merton.

The conflict between technical (i.e., rationalized) means and human ends is crucial to all modern societies and is a direct result of the revolution of the technological base of society which has been taking place in the West for more than two centuries. It is a common tendency among socialists, who have a powerful technocratic strain running through their tradition from St. Simon and Engels to Lenin, to overlook the very real danger which the proliferation and rationalization of means involves: the danger of the means *overwhelming* the ends. Yet, the major crises of the socialist movement, from Stalinist politics and Stakhonovite incentives to "bureaucratic degeneration" and market decentralization, are all facets of this central problem.

Unfortunately, Professor Ellul's volume, which is concerned with this conflict, fails to advance our understanding of the issues in any significant way. This is doubly unfortunate, because the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, one of the finest intellectual organizations in America, is devoting a whole conference to Ellul's book and one would have wished them to attack these questions from firmer ground.

For Professor Ellul, technique is the ensemble of rationalized and efficient means ("the totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency") in every field of human activity. The technical way is the efficient way, "the one best way of doing something." According to Professor Ellul, "modern society is, in fact, conducted on the basis of pure-

David Horowitz, author of *Student,* which was reviewed in MR (October 1962), is writing a doctoral dissertation on automation at the London School of Economics.

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ly technical considerations." In view of the fantastic inefficiency and waste which characterize most aspects of contemporary social reality, a generous reader might be tempted to suggest that what Ellul must really mean is that efficiency is an ideal towards which those who run things imagine themselves to be striving, but that in fact special interests and non-technical ideologies intervene to obstruct the ideal. But this is not what Ellul says he means. Technique, according to him, is "autonomous," and man and his ideologies mere adjuncts of technique. "If we make use of technique, we must accept the specificity and autonomy of its ends, and the totality of its rules. Our own desires and aspirations can change nothing."

This rigid determinism, as one would expect, leads Ellul time and again into direct conflict with the facts, even in those cases where he attempts to hedge his position with a muted variant of the above line of thought. Arguing that the autonomy of technique makes all political systems converge, since "any type of administration other than that which is technically the most efficient is impossible," Ellul extends his reasoning to include the convergence of all financial structures as well: "a different financial regime is also an impossibility." Political and social facts are fairly elusive, and therefore I leave the reader to judge Ellul's contention that "the social order is everywhere essentially identical: the variation from democracy to Communism to Fascism represents merely a superficial phenomenon," and I proceed to the financial evidence. Clearly the present tax structure, which permits a gross inequality of income is, in a purely technical sense,* inefficient, resulting in chronic underconsumption crises. Since technical considerations carry the day in society (according to Ellul) and not class interests, as the Marxians claim, or conventional wisdom, as the Galbraithians complain, there can be only one conclusion: although "a scientific tax technique" is not yet being applied, "it seems incontestable that such a rigorous technique, in view of the yields it can produce, will in the end carry the day. There is an optimum tax structure which can be completely determined. It gives the best yield to the state, and at the same time *equalizes the fortunes* of the citizens and saves the fiscal substance. There is no valid reason for not implementing it. *This optimal system is making headway in all states and is gradually overcoming the associated and adventitious ideological motives.*" This last "empirical" statement, by which Ellul attempts to verify his hypothesis,

*This is one of Ellul's favorite phrases and must be treated more circumspectly than he treats it. Thus the establishment of a criterion of "purely technical" efficiency, requires a prior agreement about ends.

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is of course in direct contradiction to the known facts. For in all capitalist countries and in many socialist countries, gross inequality of incomes persists, while in some capitalist states, the inequality has tended to *increase* since the Second World War.* This may be inefficient, but it suits the short-term interests of those whose power bears on the choice of the framework of ends in which techniques are to be employed. It is precisely the denial of this power, however, on which Ellul's entire thesis rests.

Although this is but a single example from a rather long work, it is a characteristic one, and illustrates the reason why Ellul's book is essentially useless for anyone seriously interested in the conflict between rationalized techniques and human purposes. In Ellul's eyes, there is no conflict: technique is dominant, and where it is not yet dominant, it inevitably will be. Moreover, within the realm of technique itself there can be no conflict, because technique means utilization of "the one best way." "There is no difference at all between technique and its use." Hence, "it ought never to be said: on one side, technique; on the other, the abuse of it." If a nation embarks on atomic research, "it is obligatory to pass through the stage of the atomic bomb," for the bomb is "the simplest utilization of atomic energy." Once the bomb is possessed, the possessor is led to use it. "Why? Because everything which is technique is necessarily used as soon as it is available, without distinction of good or evil. This is the principal law of our age." In this context Ellul quotes Jacques Soustelle's remark about the bomb: "Since it was possible, it was necessary." "Really a master phrase for all technical evolution," comments Ellul.

One has to admire the efficiency of all this. With the turn of a master phrase all complex and vexing questions disappear.* Indeed, Ellul's whole book is one massive schematic simplification (not to say distortion) of the profound complexity of modern human history, from the Cold War division, which is explained by the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States are the "two great technical powers" and "every other country must subordinate itself to one or the

*In the United States, for example, "throughout the 1950's, the income of the top tenth was larger than the total for the bottom *five* income-tenths, about the same relationship as existed in 1910 and 1918." Gabriel Kolko, *Wealth and Power in America,* 1962.

*For example, why two bombs then? Why two days before the Russians were scheduled to enter the war? Why without informing the Russians whose agreement to enter the war was a basic element of the Yalta agreements? If it was purely technical, why did the technicians (the scientists) disagree about whether it should be dropped?

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other of the two simply because of their technical superiority," to the evolution of the big city, which Ellul ascribes to the early nineteenth century and explains as a result of the development of machine production.

To take just this latter point, I refer to Lewis Mumford's classic work, *The City in History*: "Contrary to popular belief, the growth of the great cities *preceded* the decisive technical advances of the last *two* centuries." In fact, the centralized form of the metropolis, according to Mumford, belongs to the preceding cultural period; the new techniques naturally lent themselves to decentralization but were drawn, in spite of their potential, into an obsolescent social order.

In addition to its faulty empirical basis, Ellul's approach suffers from a fatal flaw in its theoretical structure. For as should be obvious, "the one best way of doing something" can only be determined given certain evaluative criteria; and *pace* Ellul, these criteria are not given *a priori* by some singular entity called "the technique." Failure to recognize this leads Ellul to the conclusion that the most totalitarian society is technically the most efficient, a dubious proposition at best. Thus, according to Ellul, democracy has failed to take "the decisive step of affirming that only technical necessity counts" and as a result "every time the democratic state exploits a given technique, it must begin all over again to justify itself, to debate the necessity of the proposed measure. . . . In the long run it will have to capitulate [to the dictates of technique], but in the meantime its scruples act as a drag on it, if not in the actual application of techniques (which would, in any case, be impossible) at least in its enterprise." The notion implicit here, that the necessity of a proposed measure *from a purely technical point of view* is always and on every level self-evident, and that any questioning of this necessity could only stem from the invocation of inefficient "scruples," displays an ignorance of the process of rationalized decision-making that is rather disquieting to find in a work devoted to "technique." For even at the most abstract levels of game-theory, decisions can only be arrived at with mathematical necessity given prior agreement on scales of value-preference.*

A concrete example will not only serve to elucidate these matters, but will give an idea of how central this misunderstanding is to Ellul's whole theoretical conception. "Economic technique," writes Ellul, "is almost entirely subordinated to production." Suppose for the moment that this is true, and that, as Ellul maintains, the guiding criterion of all economic activity is its efficiency in pro-

*Ellul claims that "it is necessity which characterizes the technical universe. Everything must accommodate itself to it with mathematical certainty."

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ducing what he calls "the maximum yield." How then would this predetermine the entire structure of economic technique in society, in accord with the Ellulian principle of the "automatism of choice"? What is "the maximum yield"? I mean: the maximum yield *of what?* Goods? Consumer goods? Services? Goods and services? Utility? The choice here is not a "purely technical" choice, about which there can be no disagreement. It is a very real choice and remains one until a structure of social-economic ends is agreed upon as the result, hopefully, of social debate, or unless such a structure is already built into the economic system (as it is under capitalism).

Ellul neatly by-passes these considerations with the abstraction "production." But even this abstraction is concrete enough to reveal the remoteness of Ellul's claims from the real world. In the Soviet Union, for example, the shortening of the working-day is also an important end of Soviet planning; and according to Peter Wiles (*The Political Economy of Communism*), the Russians did introduce a shorter working day than was enjoyed by English workers at a comparable stage of economic development. As for the capitalist world, despite what is said in public about the primal necessity for increased production (and Ellul would be the first to discount ideological pronouncements), the most glaring fact about modern corporate capitalism is its *underutilization* of the means and forces of production, in periods of boom as well as of recession. The end of economic activity in capitalist society (as any orthodox textbook would confirm) is profit, not gross production; production only takes place where it yields private profit.

Capitalism as an economic system is, of course, archetypically the system of Ellul's imagination, where all ends are determined by a single end—profit—and by the quantitative maximization of that end. To make this the prototype of all *possible* modern societies, as Ellul does, is to display a fetishistic attitude of the purest kind.

While socialist planning cannot dispense with all economic necessities or "freely" and "consciously" determine all social ends (a myth which certain elements in the Marxist tradition have played an unfortunate role in furthering), it is certainly the chief *economic* advantage of socialism that it permits the establishment of a "hierarchy of ends" to replace the single end of private profit in determining the allocation of society's economic resources. But Ellul's discussion of socialist planning is even less informed than his discussion of capitalist production, if that is possible. To cite but one typical example, Ellul concludes on theoretical grounds that it is impossible "to set up a planned sector of the economy alongside an unplanned sector." (p. 179)

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In Ellul's scheme of contemporary social development, as has previously been noted, dictatorships and totalitarian regimes are held to be more efficient than democracies, and the historical necessitv is for all states to move in the totalitarian direction. The efficiency of the dictatorial regimes is supposed to stem from their ability *"to use means without any limitation of any sort."* This ability is pure fantasy; no one but God has such power! Moreover, even as an approximation, the thesis is incorrect because it is a commonplace truth about technologically advanced societies, that authoritarian methods tend to be *inefficient.* They stifle both the development (e.g., the Lysenko affair) and the employment of techniques. There is little question that the chief brake on Soviet progress today is the undemocratic nature of Soviet society, and particularly the persistence of a one-party state. It is this which accounts for the lack of information flow from bottom to top, for the inertia in certain crucial command sectors, for the lack of identification of the people with the plan, and thus the necessity for elaborate incentives to ensure that the plan is fulfilled. For developed societies, Ellul's proposition that "the most authoritarian methods are the most profitable" is simply false.

If I have seemed to lay excessive stress on Ellul's errors, the reason is that, so far as I can judge, *there is little that* is right in this lengthy treatise. Just how wrong things can be is exemplified by Ellul's discussion of jazz as a prototypical cultural protest against technological enslavement, in that it is itself enslaving:

> *Let us trace [jazz] back to its origin. The Negroes were hopelessly enslaved. . . . In their extremity the Negroes discovered song, which likewise answered the needs of faith. . . . Marx's celebrated remark that nineteenth-century religion was the opiate of the European masses is equally applicable to the jazz of the Negro slaves. In jazz they created a true art form. But with it they also shut every door to freedom. Jazz imprisoned the Negroes more and more in their slavery; from then on, they drew a morose relish from it. It is highly significant that this slave music has become the music of the modern world. . . . The reason is . . . clear: it is the music of men who are satisfied with the illusion of freedom provoked by its sounds, while the chains of iron wind round them ever tighter.*

Of course jazz as an art form first appears at least a quarter of a century *after* the emancipation of the slaves, while contemporary jazz, far from reinforcing the Negroes' chains, is the music of the Negro revolt.

Ellul's book perhaps reaches the acme of its absurdity as he tries to show that the circle of totalitarian technological society is complete and that human

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"efforts towards the spiritual," implying the complete rejection of the present slave order, are doomed. "Suppose one were to write a revolutionary book" conjectures Ellul on the 419th page of his relentless and uncompromising assault on technique as the dominant and enslaving social force of technological society: "The bourgeois publishing house will not publish Lenin; the 'revolutionary' publishing house will not publish Paul Bourget; and *no one will publish a book attacking the real religion of our times, by which I mean the dominant social forces of technological society.*"

It is a pity that this is such a bad book, since the problem it endeavors to face remains a critical one. "No technique is possible when men are free," writes Ellul. Actually the reverse is true. No freedom is possible without technique. Pre-technical societies are closed societies. Never before in human history have the interstices of society been so wide or so accommodating to the spontaneity and freedom which Ellul admires as they are now. Less than 100 years ago, Ibsen had Nora walk out the door, at the end of "A Doll's House," as a revolutionary gesture. Surely the contemporary crisis stems not from the fact that as individuals we are shut in and constrained, but that as *social* beings we have nothing to do with our freedom. It is the framework of our social lives that unrestricted technique cripples, but at the same time it is only through technique and its de-mystifying power over taboos, ideologies, and superstitions that for the first time we have the chance to envision the structure of our social lives as capable of becoming something else.

Ellul is right to stress the dangers posed by technique itself, but he ignores the dialectic, and thus falsifies the progress of the last two hundred years, excluding in the process any viable basis for corrective action. It is the socialist tradition's great strength and historic contribution, that it makes the resolution of this dialectic the heart of its endeavor, that it seeks to recreate the social ties between men that capitalism has severed, without at the same time returning men to the ignorance, slavery, and superstition of precapitalist eras and social forms. The social ownership of the means of production is a crucial first step in the desired direction, but—and this is the meaning of the crisis of means and ends—it is not sufficient. With this critical realization, real contemporary socialist thinking begins.

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(continued from inside front cover)

Those of you who had the good fortune to hear Isaac Deutscher (at the May 15 teach-in of the Inter-University Committee for a Public Hearing on Vietnam) debate with the proponents of government policy, probably felt as we did that here was "a giant among pygmies." In *The Socialist Register, 1965*, the second of a series of annual volumes concerned with the problems of socialist theory and contemporary politics, Mr. Deutscher again has the lead article. This year he writes on "The Failure of Khrushchevism"; in last year's *Register*, his piece was on "Maoism: Its Origins, Background, and Outlook." You can get either the new volume or a set of both volumes of *The Socialist Register* at special prices. See back cover for details.

In our announcement of the forthcoming publication of *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* by Frantz Fanon in last month's Notes, we wrote that we had asked Adolfo Gilly, author of "The Guerrilla Movement in Guatemala" to write an introduction. He has done so and, as we anticipated, it fully measures up to the quality of the book itself. Publication date is September 15, and the list price will be $4.95; the prepub. price is $3.50 (incorrectly advertised at $3.25 on the back cover of the May issue).

There were two other errors in the May issue to which we call your attention: (1) The title of the long-awaited book by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy, is to be *Monopoly Capital* (not *Monopoly Capitalism*). Tentative publication date December; details later. (2) Keith Buchanan, author of the article on South Vietnam, teaches at Victoria University (not Victory).

For a special price on the new book by Danilo Dolci and a combination offer on two Dolci books see the back cover. If ever you wonder why we announce in June MR Press books which won't be published until the fall, the answer is simple. As the number of books published grows, so does the outlay of capital; we announce the books ahead of time because we need the money to pay for their production and we hope you will decide *now* and order promptly those books you know you will want. You get the advantage of a lower prepublication price, and we can pay our bills with the money you send in.

There is danger that the end of the academic year will cause an interruption and loss of momentum in the new and most hopeful student- and faculty-based anti-war movement. We are therefore glad to be able to report that plans are being made to continue and expand the movement during the summer months. A Committee for Foreign Policy Alternatives has been formed and will carry out projects in Washington and Baltimore during the summer. Volunteers and funds—especially funds at this stage—are urgently needed. Address all contributions and inquiries to the Committee, 48 West 125th Street, New York City.

Our next number will be the annual July-August double issue. It will be mailed out on July 1. If you are vacationing away from home this summer, may we again remind you that you can save us time and money by letting us have the following information as soon as possible:

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